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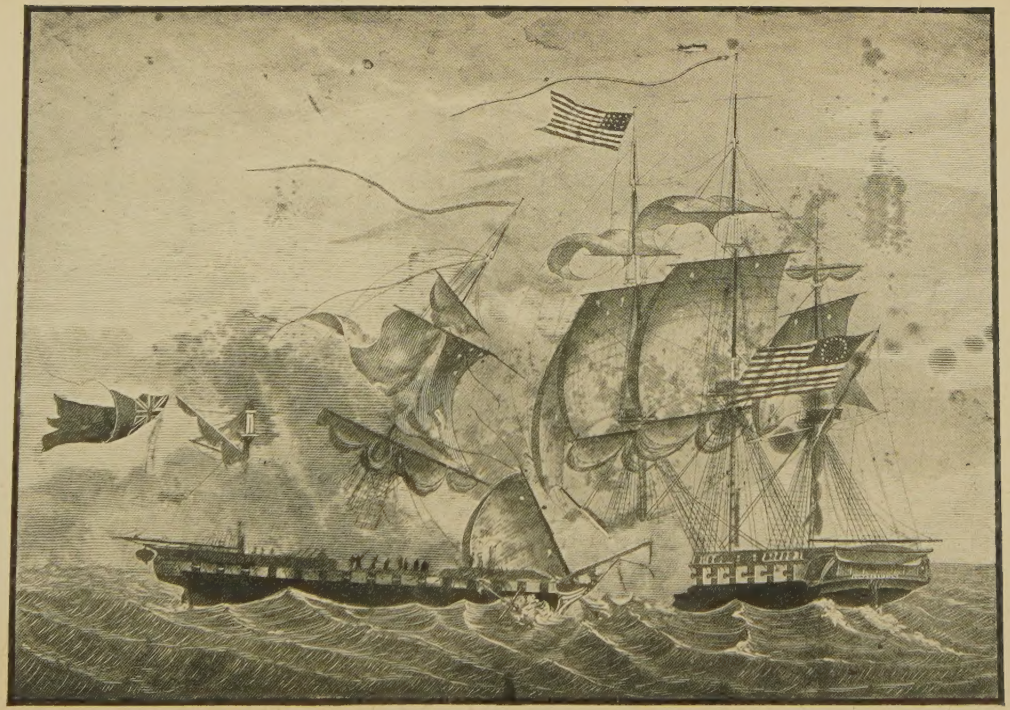

THE *CONSTITUTION* AND *GUERRIÈRE.*

From a French water-color drawing in the possession of Mr. W. C. Crane.

THE HISTORY OF OUR NAVY

FROM ITS ORIGIN TO THE PRESENT DAY

1775–1897

BY

JOHN R. SPEARS

AUTHOR OF "THE PORT OF MISSING SHIPS," "THE GOLD DIGGINGS OF CAPE HORN," ETC.

WITH MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS
MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME II.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1897

182
S74
V. 2

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29551

MANHATTAN PRESS
474 W. BROADWAY
NEW YORK

TO ALL WHO WOULD SEEK PEACE
AND PURSUE IT

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THE HISTORY OF OUR NAVY

CHAPTER I

TROUBLES ON THE EVE OF WAR

A FAIR ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF AMERICANS ENSLAVED BY THE PRESS GANGS—A BRAGGART BRITISH CAPTAIN'S WORK AT SANDY HOOK—A SEARCH FOR THE *GUERRIÈRE*—ATTACK ON THE BRITISH SHIP *LITTLE BELT*—A FEATURE OF THE BATTLE THAT WAS OVERLOOKED—WHEN THE *CONSTITUTION* SHOWED HER TEETH THE BRITISH SHIP BRAILED IT'S SPANKER AND HEADED FOR SAFER WATERS—AN EAGER YANKEE SAILOR WHO COULDN'T WAIT FOR AN ORDER TO FIRE—WAR UNAVOIDABLE.

By base arts and promises intended to be broken—by sending, for instance, one George Rose as a commissioner to Washington, ostensibly to adjust the whole matter amicably, but in reality to gain time, the British Prime Minister (the "impetuous Canning") succeeded in getting the *Chesapeake* affair "put out to nurse." The three American seamen were "reprieved on condition of re-entering the British service; not, however, without a grave

lecture from Berkeley on the enormity of their offence, and its tendency to provoke a war." Berkeley himself was called home. The British Minister told the American Government this was done by way of reproval for Berkeley's act in ordering the assault on the *Chesapeake*. As a matter of fact, he was at once rewarded with a more important command than that he had held—just as the commander of the *Leander* was promoted after having shot to death the man at the tiller of an American coaster.

Not only was the *Chesapeake* affair "put out to nurse," it was actually nursed to sleep. The people waited for the politicians to adjust it, but waited in vain, waited and watched while the brutal press-gangs continued their work. The results of these press-gang assaults upon American seamen seem—as seems the patience of the American people—almost incredible. But the figures are a matter of undisputed record. The American Minister in London, during one period of nine months, presented two hundred and seventy one petitions, begging the release of that number of American impressed seamen.

The British Admiralty at one time reported 2,548 seamen in the service who had refused to do duty on the ground that they were enslaved American citizens.

Lord Castlereagh admitted in a speech be-

English Vessel of One Hundred Cannons

fore Parliament on February 18, 1811, that "out of 145,000 seamen employed in the British service the whole number of American subjects amounts to more than 3,300." And when the papers of the State Department at Washington were searched it was found that the friends of the enormous number of 6,257 different American citizens, impressed into the British service, had filed protests there.

That more than two men would be so impressed without having a protest filed, to every one for whom such a protest was filed, is a matter of course. And what is the moderate conclusion drawn from these facts? It is that more than twenty thousand free American men were forced into the service of the British navy by the press-gangs. Their fate, save in a few cases, is unrecorded, but we know that some met the perils of the deep and were lost. Many were sent to the fever coasts of Africa and there died. Some were flogged to death at the order of officers who laughed at their tortures. And of the rest—the few—we shall read farther on. For their cries to righteous heaven for help, and the wails of mothers and wives and children left helpless by these aggressions, were to be heard at last.

A body of Massachusetts Tory merchants strove wickedly and falsely to make the world believe that Massachusetts homes had not been

A Frigate with her Sails Loose to Dry.

From a wood-cut in the "Kedge Anchor."

invaded by the press-gangs; a member of Congress stood in his place to say that in spite of restrictions the nation had "profitably exported" goods worth forty-five millions of dollars during one year, and asked if all that trade was to be sacrificed in order to strike a blow for mere sentiment; the faint-hearted pointed to the exhausted condition of the national treasury, to the utter lack of trained soldiers, and to the feebleness of the navy when it was compared with that of the nation whose "naval supremacy was become a part of the law of nations." But all these were at last brushed aside by the indignant host that arose to strike another blow for liberty—they were brushed aside so rudely, that, in one place, at least, a mob violently assaulted the toady element as represented by a Tory newspaper.

It happened that actual fighting occurred before war was declared, and most significant was one feature of the first battle of the war of 1812. The British frigate *Guerrière*, of thirty-eight guns, commanded then by Captain Samuel John Pechell, was one of the great host of war-ships that hovered about the American coast in 1811, picking able-bodied sailors from American ships, and in other ways annoying American commerce. Captain Pechell's contempt for the young republic and his personal vanity were so great that he caused the name

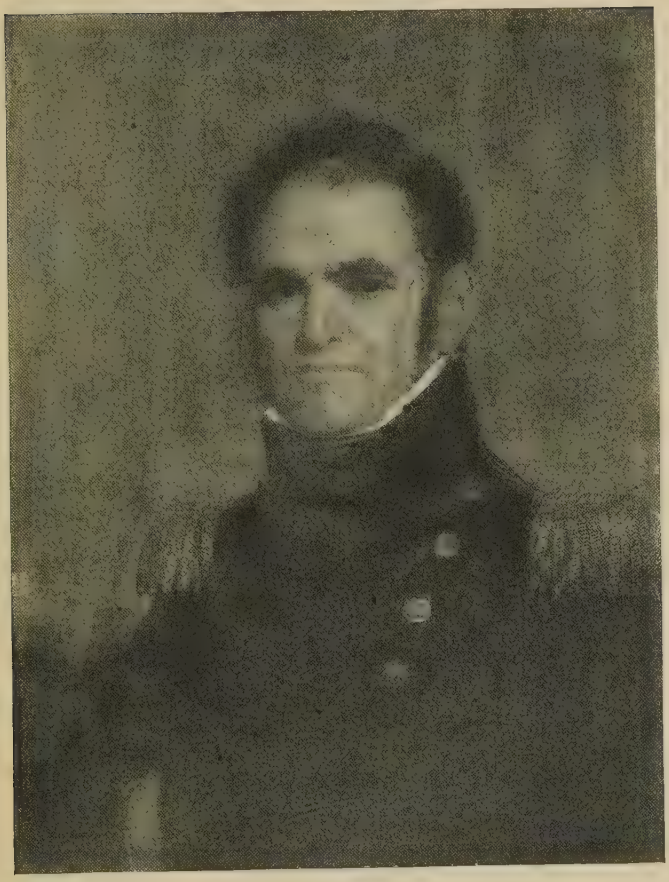
of his ship to be painted in huge letters across his foretopsail. Like a mine-camp bad man, he wanted every one to know who it was that tore open the water and split the air off the American coast. He was looking for trouble and his ship found enough of it, later on, although under another commander. Pechell himself found it, also, but he did not stay long to face it. In fact he fled from a very inferior force the moment he smelled the burning powder.

On May 1, 1811, the American merchant brig, *Spitfire*, while en route from Portland (formerly Falmouth), Maine, to New York, passed the *Guerrière*, that was lying-to at Sandy Hook, and but eighteen miles from New York City. The *Guerrière*, finding the brig bound in, deliberately stopped her there within the waters of New York and took off John Deguyo, an American citizen, who was a passenger.

At the time of this outrage the United States frigate *President*, of forty-four guns, commanded by Captain John Rodgers, was lying off Fort Severn, at Annapolis, Maryland. Captain Rodgers was at Havre de Grace, her chaplain and purser were at Washington, and her sailing-master was at Baltimore. That was in the days of stage coaches, as the reader will recall, but in spite of the slowness with which mails travelled—especially official mails—the

President tripped her anchor at dawn on the morning of May 12th, and headed away for the ocean, with her name painted on each of her three topsails. As a poker-player might say, Captain Rodgers was holding three of a kind to Captain Pechell's ace high. That he had been sent to sea to look for the *Guerrière* and get John Deguyo from her does not admit of a doubt, although he had not been specifically ordered to do so. He had been ordered to cruise up and down the coast to "protect American commerce," and the facts of the *Guerrière's* assault upon the liberty of John Deguyo had been communicated to him. The proper proceedings in the matter should he fall in with the *Guerrière* were left to his discretion. That he assumed the responsibility gladly may be inferred from what he said before sailing. He said that if he fell in with the *Guerrière* "he hoped he might prevail upon her commander to release the impressed young man."

Four days after leaving Annapolis (on May 16, 1811) the look-out saw a man-of-war approaching, and the looked-for *Guerrière* was supposed to be at hand. But while yet too far away for her name to be distinguished, the stranger wore around and headed away south. Still supposing it was the *Guerrière*, Captain Rodgers made sail after her. This was soon after the noonday meal. The *President* stead-



John Rodgers.

From the portrait by Jarvis at the Naval Academy.

ily gained on the stranger, but the wind was light, and a stern chase is a long one. As night came on the stranger hauled to the wind and tacked, and did various things, manifestly

in the hope of evading the Yankee, but all in vain, even though night and thick weather came on to help.

Finally, at 8.20 o'clock the *President*, with her crew at quarters, drew up close on the weather bow of the stranger, and Captain Rodgers hailed from the lee rail:

"What ship is that?"

Instead of an answer, the stranger replied by hailing in turn:

"What ship is that?"

Captain Rodgers repeated his question, and to his intense surprise he got for an answer a shot from the stranger that struck the *President's* mainmast. Like an echo to this shot was one, fired without orders, from the *President*. To this the stranger replied with three shots in quick succession, and then with a broadside. At that the impatient gunner who had fired from the *President* without orders had opportunity to try again under orders, and the rest of the crew joined in. For ten minutes they loaded the guns with a rapidity well worth noting, and fired with a deliberation and precision never to be forgotten. And then the stranger almost ceased firing. Because she was manifestly much inferior to the *President* in armament, Captain Rodgers ordered his men to cease firing, but no sooner had this order been obeyed than the stranger opened once

more, and his fire had to be returned. The order was obeyed with such increasing good-will that, in spite of darkness and growing wind and sea, one broadside knocked the stranger helpless, so that she wore around stern on, where another broadside might rake her fore and aft.

Now when Rodgers once more hailed he received a reply, but owing to his position to windward he could not understand it, but it is recorded that the captain pluckily said "no" when asked if he had struck. However, Rodgers ran down under the stranger's lee and hove to, where he might be of service in case she should sink, and there he waited for daylight.

During the night the two vessels drifted apart, but at 8 o'clock the next morning the *President* ranged up and sent Lieutenant Creighton on board the stranger, to "regret the necessity which had led to such an unhappy result," and offer assistance, if any were needed.

It was then learned that she was the "twenty-gun corvette *Little Belt*, Commander Arthur B. Bingham." She had carried a crew of one hundred and twenty-one all told, and of these no less than eleven were killed, and twenty-one wounded—a list of casualties amounting to more than one-fourth of all she carried, although, even by the British account (see Allen)

The *Little Belt* Breaking up at Battersea.

From an engraving by Cooke of a drawing by Francia.

the time that elapsed between the first hail and the last was but half an hour, while the time passed in actual combat did not exceed fifteen minutes. On the *President* one boy was slightly hurt by a splinter.

In the controversy that followed this conflict the significance of the figures—significance of

the deadly fire of the Americans—was wholly lost to sight. The whole affair was, of course, carefully investigated by both Governments. The officers on each ship swore that the other fired the first gun. The British captain's statement, however, was greatly weakened by his assertion that he had kept up the fight for three-quarters of an hour and that he had really beaten off his bigger opponent. So Allen, already quoted, says that "a gun was fired from each ship, but whether by accident or design, or from which ship first, remains involved in doubt."

This fight occurred, as the reader remembers, when the two nations were nominally at peace, but it was a blow—the first blow struck at the press-gangs.

Another incident of similar import, though bloodless, occurred before the end of the year 1811. The *Constitution*, Captain Isaac Hull, had gone to Texel to carry specie for the payment of interest on the American bonds held there, and when returning had called at Portsmouth to enable Captain Hull to communicate with the American legation in London. One night, while the captain was in London, a British officer came on board the *Constitution* to say that an American deserter was on the British war-ship *Havana*, lying near by, and the *Constitution* could have him by sending for

him. So the executive officer, Lieutenant Morris, sent a boat next morning, but it came back with a notice that an order for the man must first be obtained from Admiral Sir Roger Curtis. To this official then went Lieutenant Morris, when the admiral calmly informed him that the man claimed to be a British subject, and therefore he should not be returned.

It was fairly manifest that the British officials had for some reason been playing with the temporary commander of the *Constitution*, but Lieutenant Morris had his revenge within a day, for on the next night a British sailor boarded the *Constitution*, admitted that he was a deserter from the *Havana*, and said, when asked his nationality, that he was "An American, *sor*."

At that, word was sent the commander of the *Havana* that a deserter from his ship was on the *Constitution*, but when an officer from the *Havana* came after the man, Lieutenant Morris blandly informed him that the man claimed to be an American and therefore he could not be given up.

This threw the British naval people into a turmoil, and a little later two British frigates shifted their berths and anchored where it was probable that the *Constitution* would, on getting under way, foul one or the other.

Seeing they were laying a trap for him, Lieu-

tenant Morris got up anchor, and by the skill in handling a ship common among American officers, dropped clear to a new berth.

Hardly was he at anchor again, however, before the two frigates once more drew near and again anchored to trap the Yankee frigate.

The three ships were lying so when Captain Hull returned from London that evening. That the Englishmen were intending to make trouble about the sailor with a brogue seemed plain, but Captain Hull, remembering the trick played on the *Chesapeake*, was not to be caught napping. He cleared the ship for action, and, with battle-lanterns burning, guns loaded, and extra ammunition at each gun, he made sail, got up his anchor, and, slipping clear of the British frigates, put to sea. There were two Britishers to the one Yankee, but the Yankee was ready to fight.

As the *Constitution* stood away down the roads the British frigates made sail in chase. For a time the *Constitution* carried a press of canvas, but when it was seen that one of the enemy was dropping out of sight Captain Hull backed his main-yard and waited for the other.

"If that fellow wants to fight we won't disappoint him," said the captain.

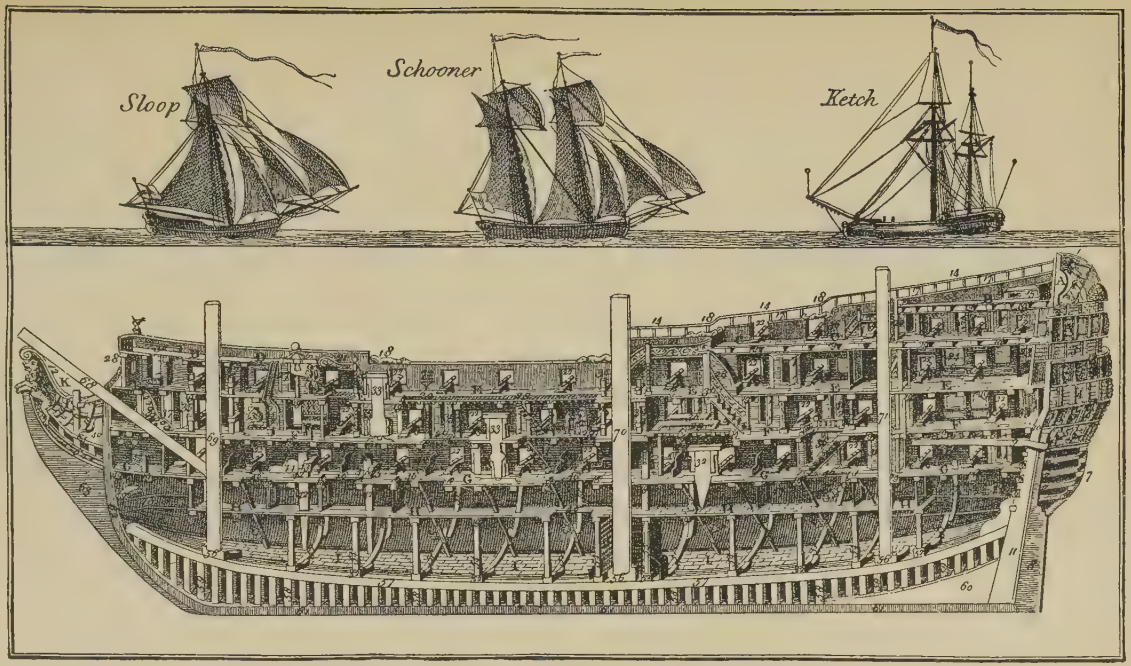
As the enemy ranged up within hail Lieutenant Morris walked forward along the gun-deck to encourage the men, and found that

never did a crew need encouragement less. Gun-captains were bringing their guns to bear on the enemy, and their men, stripped to the waist in many cases, were hauling on the side-tackles with a vigor that made the carriages jump.

But they were to be disappointed. The Englishman came yapping up till he saw the teeth of the silent Yankee turned upon him, when he hesitated, turned, brailed in his spanker as a dog tucks its tail between its legs, and ran back to his own enclosure.

And then there was the occasion when the *United States*, commanded by Captain Stephen Decatur, of Tripoli fame, fell in with the British ships *Eurydice* and *Atalanta* while cruising off Sandy Hook. Decatur had his men at their guns, of course, though he had no reason for trying either to force or to avoid a fight. But while he was exchanging hails with one of the other ships an impatient gunner on the *United States* pulled his lanyard and sent a ball into one of the British ships. It was unquestionably done by the man to force a fight, though when he saw that it did not bring a single return shot he said he did it accidentally, and the shot was so explained to the British captains.

This incident, like that of the *Constitution* at Plymouth, is worth mentioning to show the



The Section of a First-rate Ship.

Being cut or divided by the middle from the stem to the stern, at one view discovering the decks, guns, cabins, etc.

feeling of the American seamen regarding the British theory and practice of impressment. And this feeling was becoming well known to all informed and thinking persons in both countries. It could now no longer be doubted that the American people would fight to gain freedom for their countrymen enslaved in British war-ships.

It is admitted that the politicians at Washington still talked as loudly of free trade on the high seas as ever they had done ; it is admitted that "free trade" stood before "sailors' rights" in the motto of the day—but it is declared, nevertheless, that the sentiment of the people, which alone can declare a war in this republic, was roused by the outrages upon man, and not upon property.

Had the British been animated by any other feeling than "the spirit of animosity and unconciliating contempt," they could have averted further trouble by definitely abandoning their hostile attitude toward the young republic. They had opportunity to do this gracefully, for, yielding to the sentiment of the humane element of their nation, the Ministry had decided to once more disavow the *Chesapeake* affair and to return the men to the deck of the ship from which they had been taken. Two only remained alive, one having been hanged and the other having succumbed to the hard-

ships to which he was subjected, but these were in fact put on the *Chesapeake* in Boston Harbor. Nevertheless, instead of abandoning the practice which led to the outrage, the right to continue it was reaffirmed. Indeed, every proposition made by the portion of the nation that loved justice more than conquest excited only derision among the nation's rulers, and among the masses, too, for that matter. War was inevitable, and on June 18, 1812, it was declared to exist.

CHAPTER II

THE OUTLOOK WAS, AT FIRST, NOT PLEASING

THE SILLY CRY OF "ON TO CANADA!"—THE NAVAL FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES COMPARED WITH THOSE OF GREAT BRITAIN —THE FORESIGHT AND QUICK WORK OF CAPTAIN RODGERS IN GETTING A SQUADRON TO SEA—BUT HE MISSED THE JAMAICA FLEET HE WAS AFTER, AND WHEN HE FELL IN WITH A BRITISH FRIGATE, THE RESULTS OF THE AFFAIR WERE LAMENTABLE.

ALTHOUGH "vast multitudes" of the American people had "passionately wished for" a declaration of war against Great Britain, that declaration was, indeed, "a solemn and serious fact" to those who stopped to consider what odds must be met. What those odds were will be told further on, but in view of the fact that the naval supremacy of England is about as pronounced at the end of the nineteenth century as it was at the beginning, it is well worth while giving a glance at the plans of the Americans in 1812. For the cry was "*on to Canada!*" Canada was very likely to welcome an opportunity to join the republic, but even if she did not do that she was but feeble, and

the spirited Yankee militia would overrun the whole region and take revenge for the wrongs received at the hands of the English by annexing the whole fair domain. The sea-power of Great Britain was overwhelming, of course, but we had coast-defence vessels by the hundred—nearly three hundred schooners carrying a big gun each, and these should defend the principal American forts while the valiant militia slaughtered the Canadians! The majority of the American people seriously believed that the way to defend American citizens from the aggressions of the only nation likely to abuse them was by building a navy for coast defence only and marching to Canada when ready for offensive operations. But if that must seem astonishing to every one who has rightly studied the war of 1812, what can be said of the fact that this same theory of protecting the United States from British aggression is still held by as great a majority as ever? For it must not be forgotten that the American assaults on Canada were as futile as the American militia were worthless. There was but one fight made by the land forces alone of which Americans are proud—that at New Orleans.

On a casual glance at the American sea-power in 1812 the lack of confidence in it was merited. For of sea-going craft we had only

17, carrying all told 442 guns and 5,025 men. Even of these ships two were condemned as unfit for service as soon as they were inspected. And as for the gun-boats, they were simply brushed aside the moment actual hostilities began. But Great Britain had 1,048 ships to our 17; these ships carried 27,800 guns to

A Brigantine of a Hundred Years Ago at Anchor.

From a picture drawn and engraved by Baugean.

our 442 and 151,572 men to our 5,025. Of course the majority of these ships were employed elsewhere than on the American coast. But by the London *Times* of December 28, 1812, the British had, "from Halifax to the West Indies, seven times the force of the whole American navy." By a pennant sheet taken

from the British schooner *Highflyer* in 1813 there were on the American coast on March 13th, 107 British ships rated as carrying 3,055 guns, among which were 12 ships of the line rated as seventy-fours. As a matter of fact these ships actually carried at least ten per cent. more guns than their rating indicated. That this preponderance was increased as time passed, and that there was good reason for increasing it, will appear farther on.

The faint-hearted, indeed, were not without reason when they spoke of the declaration of war as "the dreaded and alarming intelligence." But if the reader wishes for a correct idea of the quality of the men who, in that day stood erect, facing the quarter-deck, and uncovered their heads whenever the brawny quartermaster hoisted the old flag, he will find it in the fact that they—the men of the American navy—were the foremost among those who "passionately wished for" a war with this power—a power that outnumbered them and out-weighed them on their own coast as seven to one.

Nor was the power of the British navy found only in the number and size of her ships and the number and size of the guns. "Since the year 1792 each European nation in turn had learned to feel bitter dread of the weight of England's hand. In the Baltic Sir Samuel Hood had taught the Russians that they must

An English Admiral of 1809.

From an engraving at the Navy Department, Washington.

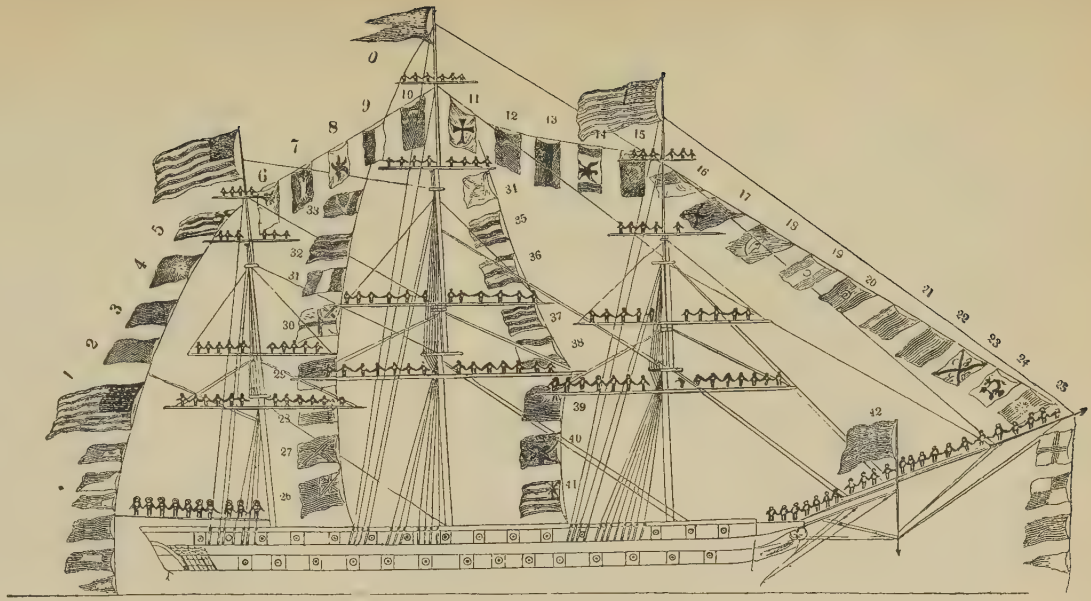
needs keep in port when the English cruisers were in the offing. The descendants of the Vikings had seen their whole navy destroyed at Copenhagen. No Dutch fleet ever put out after the day when, off Camperdown, Lord Duncan took possession of De Winter's shattered ships. But a few years before 1812 the greatest sea-fighter of all time had died in Trafalgar Bay, and in dying had crumbled to pieces the navies of France and Spain." In spite of the infamous system under which the British ships were manned, the personnel of the British navy was—one is tempted to say it was beyond comparison better than that of any other European nation. For the others felt "the lack of habit—may it not even be said without injustice, of aptitude for the sea." The officers and men who gathered to crush the navy of the young republic came from Aboukir and Copenhagen and Trafalgar Bay. They were veterans in naval warfare—men who preferred short weapons as the Romans did, men who preferred to fight with yard-arm interlocking yard-arm, where short carronades were better than long guns of smaller bore, and where even these might be made more effective through loading with double shot. Luckily for us their long experience had engendered prejudiced conservatism, their many victories had cultivated an overweening confidence, and their bull-dog cour-

age had made them careless of the arts of seamanship.

As to the ability of the American crews who were to meet these tar-stained, smoke-begrimed, cicatrice-marked veterans, enough will be told in the descriptions of their battles, for they astounded the whole world.

Nevertheless, the war at sea began in a fashion to discourage the nation and humiliate the whole navy.

On the day (June 18, 1812) that war was declared, the effective part of the American navy —the only American naval ships ready for a fight—lay in New York Harbor, or else were at sea where they could not hear the news. The ships in New York were the flag-ship *President*, rated forty-four, Captain Rodgers; the *United States*, forty-four, Captain Decatur; the *Congress*, thirty-eight, Captain Smith; the *Hornet*, eighteen, Captain Lawrence, and the *Argus*, sixteen, Lieutenant Sinclair. Nothing more discreditable to the administration of President Madison than this fact can be told. He had seen for months that war was inevitable and yet he had done nothing to gather in the ships and prepare them for the fight. And Monroe was Secretary of State. But for the earnest remonstrances of Captains Bainbridge and Stewart, who repeatedly addressed the Department, every American war-



Representation of a Ship-of-war, dressed with flags, and yards manned.

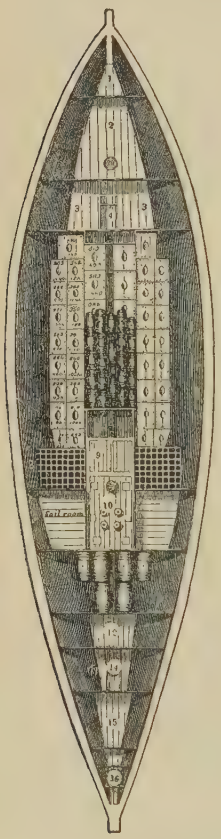
1. American Ensign.
2. Ottoman-Greek
3. Norden.
4. Stralsund.
5. Greek.
6. Brandenburg.
7. Hanover.
8. Prussia.
9. Saxony.
10. Morocco.
11. Maltese.
12. Arabia.
13. Columbia.
14. Mexican.
15. Brazil.
16. Hayti.
17. Japan.
18. Mogul.
19. Buenos Ayres.
20. Spanish.
21. Tunis.
22. St. Domingo.
23. Old Sardinia.
24. Majorca.
25. Peru.
26. English (blue).
27. Venezuela.
28. Chili.
29. Normandy.
30. English (white).
31. French.
32. Tripoli.
33. Salee.
34. Old Portugal.
35. Algiers.
36. Senegal.
37. Oporto.
38. Central America.
39. English (red).
40. E. Russia.
41. Sandwich Islands.
42. American Jack.
0. Commodore's Broad Pendant.

Note.—Those which have no numbers affixed are the ship's signals, or, rather, the telegraphic numbers.

From the "Kedge Anchor."

ship would have been kept in port for harbor defence.

But if the Administration had done nothing, Captain Rodgers, as commodore of the squadron in New York, had done everything—he had done so well that within one hour from the time that a messenger from Washington arrived on board the *President* with the declaration of war and instructions to put to sea, the whole squadron except the *Essex* was under sail, heading down New York Bay toward Sandy Hook.



The Internal Arrangements and Stowage of an American Sloop-of-War.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

This was on June 21, 1812. Commodore Rodgers was bound out to intercept a big fleet of British merchantmen sailing home from Jamaica, convoyed only by the thirty-six-gun frig-

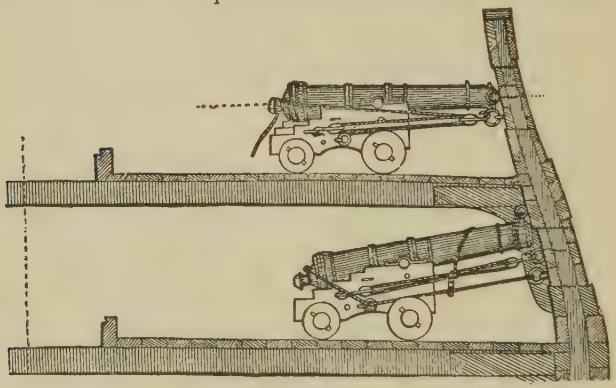
ate *Thalia* and the eighteen-gun corvette *Reindeer*. This fleet had left Jamaica, it was said, on the 20th, and it was sure to follow the Gulf Stream under very easy sail. But when Rodgers was a short way out to sea an American brig reported the fleet well down the stream (about due east of Boston and well off shore) on June 17th. The fleet had sailed some days earlier than the Americans had supposed. So the squadron hauled to the northeast in pursuit.

At 6 o'clock on the morning of June 23d, when the squadron was thirty-five miles southwest of Nantucket shoals, a sail was seen. It was the thirty-three-gun frigate *Belvidera*, Captain Byron, that was then lying in wait for a French privateer expected from New London, Connecticut. At once the *Belvidera* headed toward the American squadron to examine them, but when at 6.30 A.M. she discovered their character she wore around and headed away to the northeast with a smacking breeze over the port quarter and studding-sails set.

At once the Yankees made sail in chase, with the *President*, the swiftest of the squadron when sailing free, well in the lead. By 11 o'clock the *President* was near enough to warrant clearing for action, but a shift of wind helped the *Belvidera* and she held her own until 2 P.M., when another shift favored the *Presi-*

dent, so that at 4.20 P.M. the Britisher with her colors flying was within range.

Getting behind one of the long bow-chasers on the forecastle of the *President*, Commodore Rodgers carefully sighted it, and pulling the lanyard, fired the first shot of the war of 1812. It knocked the splinters out of the stern of the



Guns Secured for a Gale.
From the "Kedge Anchor."

flying enemy. The second shot was fired from a bow-chaser on the deck below, and a third was fired on the forecastle. Each of these reached its target. One passed through the rudder-coat, and another, striking the muzzle of a stern-chaser, broke into pieces, which killed two men, severely wounded two more, and slightly wounded three others, including a lieutenant who was aiming the gun.

Greatly elated at the accuracy of their fire, the men working the *President's* bow-chaser

on the lower deck aimed a fourth shot. A boy with his leather box full of powder-cartridges arrived just as the gunner was pulling his lanyard, and then when the hammer fell the gun exploded and the flames from the splitting breech darted into the open box of powder, setting it off as well.

The explosion knocked the men in all directions, disabled for the moment every one of the bow-chasers, and bursting up the deck above, it threw Commodore Rodgers so violently into the air that when he fell his leg was broken. Of the men standing about the gun two were killed and thirteen wounded.

At that moment the *Belvidera* opened an effective fire with her stern-chasers, and one of her projectiles came crashing into the *President's* bows, and went bounding along the gun-deck, killing a midshipman and wounding a number of seamen. For a time there was not a little confusion on the *President*, but her crew soon got to work again and began to make it warm on the *Belvidera* once more. But the mistake of yawing to fire broadsides was made. That "a whole broadside battery will be much less likely to 'disable a flying enemy' than the cool and careful use of one well-served gun," has been amply proven. The yawing gave the *Belvidera* a gain in the race. That she would have waited for a fight with

the *President* but for the presence of the other ships is not doubted, but, as it was, Captain Byron saw that something desperate must be done to escape, so he threw over his spare anchors and boats and fourteen tons of water in casks. So lightened, he was able to outsail the Yankee squadron and escape.

The *President* lost three killed and nineteen wounded, and was considerably cut up aloft. The *Belvidera* lost two killed and twenty-two wounded, Captain Byron being among the number. His rigging was also cut up somewhat, but he made such a good running fight of it that a painting, by a British artist, was made of the scene, that, according to Allen's history, is preserved to this day.

As for the American squadron, it vainly followed the Jamaica fleet to within less than a day's sail of the English Channel, and returned home by the way of the Madeiras and Azores, reaching Boston after a cruise of sixty-nine days, in which nothing had been accomplished, save only that seven merchantmen were taken and an American ship recaptured.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST EXHIBIT OF YANKEE METTLE

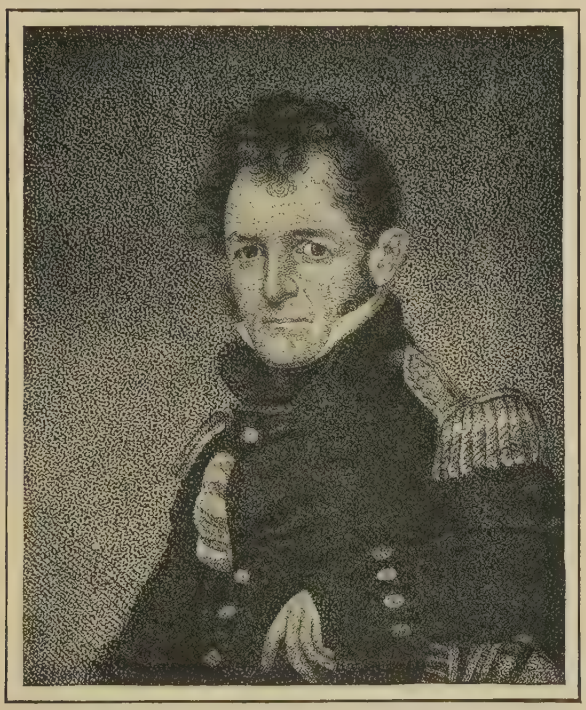
CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER'S IDEAS ABOUT TRAINING SEAMEN—THE GUNS OF THE *ESSEX*—TAKING A TRANSPORT OUT OF A CONVOY AT NIGHT—A BRITISH FRIGATE CAPTAIN WHO WAS CALLED A COWARD BY HIS COUNTRYMEN—CAPTAIN LAUGHARNE'S MISTAKE—A FIGHT THAT BEGAN WITH CHEERS AND ENDED IN DISMAY FOR WHICH THERE WAS GOOD CAUSE—WORK THAT WAS DONE BY YANKEE GUNNERS IN EIGHT MINUTES—WHEN FARRAGUT SAVED THE SHIP—AN ATTACK ON A FIFTY-GUN SHIP PLANNED.

DURING the time that Commodore Rodgers was making what was practically a fruitless cruise with his squadron, Captain David Porter was doing somewhat better with the little frigate *Essex*. Rarely has a naval man had the benefit of such experiences as those through which Captain Porter had passed. At the age of sixteen (1796), while in the West Indies on the merchant-schooner *Eliza*, of which his father was commander, he had stood at the rail with the rest of the crew and fought off a British press-gang in such a determined assault that several men were killed and wounded on both sides. A year later he was twice impressed

into the British navy, but escaped both times. Then he joined the American navy as a midshipman, and, as already told, showed himself a hero in helping to hold the prisoners on a captured French frigate for three days, although they were in overwhelming numbers, and he had to watch them during all the time without a moment's sleep. In a pilot-boat called the *Amphitrite*, that mounted but five one-pounder swivels and carried fifteen men, he attacked a French privateer armed with a long twelve-pounder and a number of swivels, and carrying forty men. Moreover, the Frenchman was supported by a barge armed with swivels and carrying thirty men. Such odds had rarely been taken, but the impetuous onslaught of the Yankees carried the privateer after a bloody resistance. She had lost seven killed and fifteen wounded, more than half her crew, when she surrendered. Porter did not lose a man. The barge escaped, but a merchant-prize they had captured was retaken. After a variety of exploits only less daring than this, he was sent to the Mediterranean Sea, and there continued to gain knowledge, skill, and reputation until, by the grounding of the *Philadelphia*, he became a prisoner to the Tripolitans.

When war was declared in 1812 he was in the *Essex*. She was undergoing repairs in New York Harbor. It was fortunate for Porter that

she was not ready to sail with Rodgers, for the delay enabled him to make a cruise alone. And this cruise, because of what it shows about



David Porter.

From an engraving by Edwin of the portrait by Wood.

the American armament and American seamen, is worth describing in detail.

The *Essex* was rated as a thirty-two-gun frigate, but she carried forty-six carriage-guns all told. As to her numbers of guns she was

greatly underrated, but as to the effectiveness of her armament she was the most overrated ship in the little navy. She had originally mounted twenty-six long twelve-pounders on her main deck, while her forecastle and poop carried sixteen twenty-four-pounder carronades, "but official wisdom changed all this." The Navy Department took out twenty-four of her main deck long twelves and put thirty-two-pounder carronades there instead. Then the poop and forecastle were swept clear of the twenty-four-pounder carronades and four long twelves and sixteen thirty-two-pounder carronades were mounted there. Porter protested over and again, but in vain.

To fully understand why Porter should have protested against this armament one must know the character of the guns. This is a matter that has been discussed at very great length by almost every one who has written on the navy of any nation. But, for the aid of the uninformed reader, it may be said that an average long thirty-two-pounder was eight and a half feet long, and weighed 4,500 pounds, while a thirty-two-pounder carronade was four feet long and weighed but 1,700 pounds. Being thick at the breech and long, the long gun had a long range. That is, a heavy powder charge would act on the ball throughout the length of the long bore and so hurl the ball over a long

range. The short gun being short, and thin at the breech, could stand only about one-third of the charge of powder used in the long gun. Where the long thirty-two burned seven pounds of powder and had a range, when elevated one degree, of six hundred and forty yards (not counting the ricochet leaps), the short thirty-two burned two and a half pounds of powder and had a range of three hundred and eighty yards.

A short range means a small power to penetrate, not fully expressed by the above figures. To make a carronade really effective the ship had to be placed within two hundred yards of the enemy, and even at twenty yards it was known that a thirty-two-pounder ball stuck in a ship's mast instead of crashing through it, and the long twelves could do effective work when entirely beyond the range of the short thirty-two, for they were made heavier in proportion to the size of the ball than the long thirty-two, and had a range quite equal to that of the larger calibre. But the long gun in that day was exceedingly heavy. It needed a big carriage and big tackles, and a big crew. It was a hard job to load and aim one of these long guns. The short gun, throwing a ball of the same size, weighed, as shown, comparatively little and could, therefore, be loaded and fired much more rapidly. When within pistol-

shot of the enemy this was an advantage, of course. Another advantage of the short gun was in the fact that a battery of them did not strain a ship as a battery of long guns would do. But when all was said in favor of a short gun of big bore, the fact remained that in a combat, a handy ship having long guns could remain out of range of the ship having short guns and shoot it to pieces. The short-gun ship had to close in on the other or suffer defeat. Had Porter's petition for his long twelves been granted he would have had a different story to tell when he reached the Pacific.

But this chapter is to tell of his first cruise in the *Essex*. On July 2, 1812, he was off to sea in search of the British thirty-six-gun frigate *Thetis*, which was bound to South America with specie. The *Thetis* escaped, but a few merchantmen were captured, and then on the night of the 10th a fleet of seven merchantmen in convoy was discovered. As it happened the moon was shining, but the sky was so well overcast with clouds that the alternating shadows and lights made it easy for Porter to pose the *Essex* as a merchant-ship. Her top-gallant masts were dropped part way down to conceal their height, the lee braces and other running rigging were left slack, and the guns were run in and ports closed. In

this fashion Porter jogged with the fleet, where in casual conversation he learned that a thousand soldiers were there en route from Barbadoes to Quebec, and that the thirty-two-gun frigate *Minerva* was the sole guard.

After a time a ship-captain to whom Porter was talking became suspicious, and started to signal the presence of a stranger to the *Minerva*, but Porter threw open his ports and compelled the merchantman to follow the *Essex* out of the fleet. This manœuvre was done without alarming any other one in the fleet. On boarding her, one hundred and ninety-seven soldiers were found.

The merchantman was captured at 3 o'clock in the morning. Before another could be overhauled daylight came. At that, Porter took in the slack of his loose rigging, set up his masts and invited the *Minerva* to come and try for victory. Captain Richard Hawkins, who commanded her, thought best to tack and sail into the midst of his fleet, where, in case he was attacked, the eight hundred and odd soldiers who were on the transports could render him effective service by sweeping the decks of the *Essex* with their muskets, and by firing such cannon as the transports carried. James, who is the standard naval historian in the British navy, says of this affair :

"Had Captain Porter really endeavored to

bring the *Minerva* to action we do not see what could have prevented the *Essex*, with her superiority of sailing, from coming alongside of her. But no such thought, we are sure, entered into Captain Porter's head."

David G. Farragut, of lasting fame, was a midshipman on the *Essex*, and was keeping a journal. He wrote:

"The captured British officers were very anxious for us to have a fight with the *Minerva*, as they considered her a good match for the *Essex*, and Captain Porter replied that he should gratify them with pleasure if his Majesty's commander was of their taste. So we stood toward the convoy, and when within gunshot hove to, and awaited the *Minerva*; but she tacked and stood in among the convoy, to the utter amazement of our prisoners, who denounced the commander as a base coward, and expressed their determination to report him to the Admiralty."

But to further explain the difference between long and short guns, it should be mentioned that the *Minerva* carried on her main deck the long twelves which Porter had wanted, and in a fight she would have been able to riddle the *Essex* while still far beyond the range of the short thirty-twos with which the American was armed. At pistol range the *Essex* was much more powerful, and she carried, moreover, fifty men more than the *Minerva*, though Captain

Hawkins could not know that, and, doubtless, would have been ashamed to offer that as a reason for declining to fight.

Until August 13th the *Essex* had no adventure. On that day, while cruising along under reefed top-sails, a ship was seen to windward that appeared to be a man-of-war. At this, drags were put over the stern of the *Essex* to hold her back, and then a few men were sent aloft to shake out the reefs, and the sails were then

Fight of the *Essex* and the *Alert*.
From an old wood-cut.

spread to the breeze exactly as a merchant-crew would have done it. The stranger was entirely deceived by this, and she came bowling down toward the *Essex*, which was now flying the British flag. The stranger having fired a gun, the *Essex* hove to until she had passed under her stern to leeward. Having now the weather-gage, the *Essex* suddenly filled away

her main-sails, cut away the drags, hauled down the British flag, ran up the Stars and Stripes, and, throwing open her ports, ran out the muzzles of her guns.

At the sight of these doings the Englishmen gave three cheers, and, without waiting to get where their guns would bear effectively, they blazed away with grape and canister.

The *Essex* waited for a minute or two until her guns would bear, and then gave the stranger a broadside, "tompions and all," as Midshipman Farragut wrote at the time. The effect on the stranger was stunning. Her crew were actually stunned into inaction, and all of them but three officers were severely reprimanded at the court-martial of the captain, and several of the lower officers were dishonorably dismissed from the service on a charge of cowardice. They tried to veer off and run away, but "she was in the lion's reach," to again quote the youngster, and within eight minutes the *Essex* was alongside, when the stranger fired a musket and then struck her flag.

The American officer who boarded her found that she was the corvette *Alert*, Captain Thomas L. P. Laugharne, carrying eighteen short thirty-twos and two long twelves, a very inferior force to that of the *Essex*. And yet the result of this brief contest was of the greatest significance. The British histories say the fight last-

ed fifteen minutes. Doubtless this means from the time the *Alert's* crew cheered so vigorously until they hauled down their flag. Farragut says that it was eight minutes from the first broadside of the *Essex* until the flag came down, and this is not disputed. In eight minutes the *Essex* had shot the *Alert* so full of holes that when the American boat's crew reached the beaten ship the water was seven feet deep in her hold in spite of the utmost efforts of her crew to check the leaks! Not a man was killed on the *Alert*, and only three were wounded. The gunners of the *Essex* aimed low—they shot to sink the enemy, and they wellnigh succeeded. No one was hurt on the *Essex*.

For several days after this the *Essex*, having repaired the *Alert*, cruised with her in tow, and then an incident occurred, the story of which brings out very clearly another characteristic of the American crews; that is to say, the care with which the green crews were trained from the day they came on board.

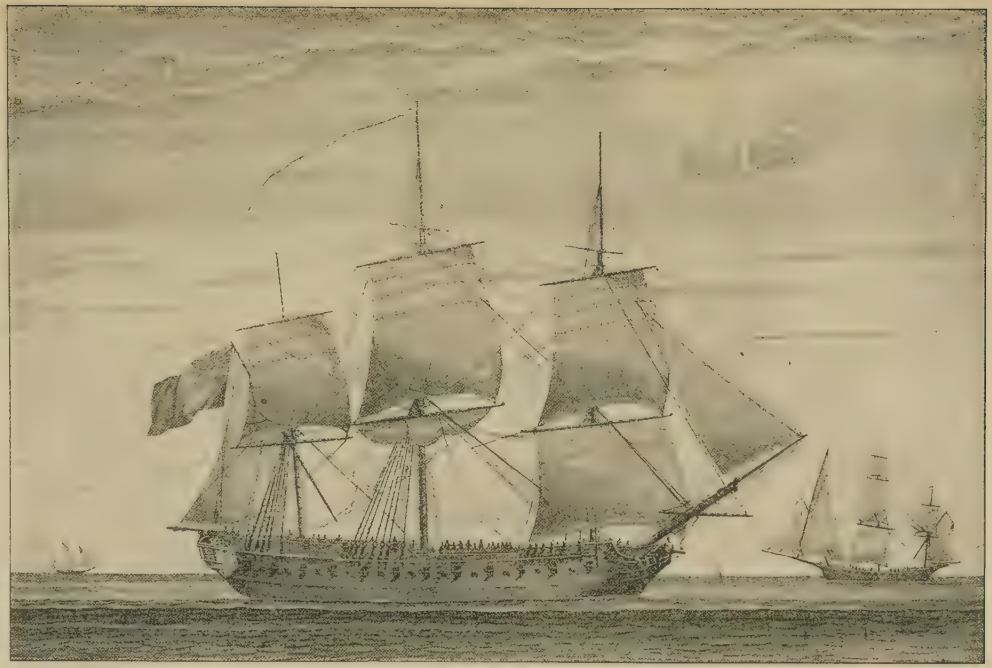
The number of prisoners on the *Essex* very greatly exceeded her crew after the capture of the *Alert*, for the *Alert's* crew were added to the soldiers and men from the transport, while the *Essex* had put out two prize crews. Knowing this, the prisoners formed a plan to take the ship, the coxswain of the *Alert's* gig being the

leader in the conspiracy. Young Farragut happened to discover the plot on the night it was to be executed. He was lying in his hammock and saw the coxswain with a pistol in hand on the deck where the hammock was swinging. The coxswain was looking around to see if all was in order for his men to rise, and going to Farragut's hammock, looked earnestly at the boy, who had the wit to feign sleep. But the moment the coxswain was gone, Farragut ran into the cabin and told Captain Porter, who sprang from his berth, and running out of his cabin began to shout:

"Fire! Fire!"

A more distressful cry than that is never heard at sea. To the prisoners it brought utter confusion. To the crew of the *Essex* it meant only that they were to hasten to fire-quarters for a night-drill—something to which they had been trained ever since leaving New York. Captain Porter had even built fires that sent up volumes of smoke through the hatches in order to make the crew face what seemed to be a real fire, and so had steadied their nerves. Now they promptly but coolly went to their quarters. It was then a simple matter to turn them on the mutineers.

Afterwards the prisoners were sent to St. John's, Newfoundland, in the *Alert* as a cartel. She was not by the letter of the law a proper



An English Thirty-gun Corvette.

From an engraving by Merlo in 1794.

cartel, for she was still at sea and quite likely to be captured, but it is pleasant to observe that Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth "generously sustained the agreement" made by Captain Laugharne. He wrote:

"It is utterly inconsistent with the laws of war to recognize the principle upon which this arrangement has been made. Nevertheless I am willing to give a proof at once of my respect for the liberality with which the captain of the *Essex* has acted in more than one instance toward the British subjects who had fallen into his hands; of the sacred obligation that is always felt to fulfil the engagements of a British officer, and of my confidence in the disposition of his Highness, the Prince Regent, to allay the violence of war by encouraging a reciprocation of that courtesy by which its pressure upon individuals may be so essentially diminished."

There is still one more incident of this cruise worth describing. The *Essex* was chased by the British frigate *Shannon* and another ship when off St. George's Bank. Captain Porter supposed that the speedier ship of the two was the fifty-gun *Acasta*, a much more powerful ship than the *Shannon*, and that a third ship he had seen with the two was also in chase. As the largest ship was gaining, and a splendid breeze for working the ship was blowing, Cap-

SIR JOHN THOMAS DUCKWORTH, K.B.

Vice Admiral of the White Squadron.

tain Porter planned a most daring defence. Running until night was fully come, he called his crew together and told them that he was going to tack ship, run alongside the enemy, and board her while under full sail. According to Farragut, Porter believed that the enemy would be sailing at the rate of eight knots an hour, at least, while his ship would foul her while going at not less than four knots. Nevertheless, the proposition was greeted with enthusiastic cheers.

The cause of the enthusiasm may be found readily in Farragut's account of the crew. He says :

" Every day the crew were exercised at the great guns, small-arms, and single-stick. And I may here mention the fact that I have never been on a ship where the crew of the old *Essex* was represented, but that I found them to be the best swordsmen on board. They had been so thoroughly trained as boarders that every man was prepared for such an emergency, with his cutlass as sharp as a razor, a dirk made by the ship's armorer out of a file, and a pistol." They had been drilled until they had confidence in themselves as well as their leaders, and it was not an overweening confidence, either.

So a kedge anchor with a cable attached was hoisted to the end of the main-yard, where it could be readily dropped on the passing enemy

as the two crashed together and so hold her fast. At the proper hour the *Essex* tacked in search of the enemy, but failed to find her.

At the end of sixty days from the time he sailed, Porter was back in port. He had captured nine prizes, with more than five hundred prisoners, and retaken five American privateers and merchantmen.

The little American navy was beginning in a small way to do something for the nation.

CHAPTER IV

A RACE FOR THE LIFE OF A NATION

STORY OF THE *CONSTITUTION'S* ESCAPE FROM A BRITISH SQUADRON OFF THE JERSEY BEACH—FOUR FRIGATES AND A LINER WERE AFTER HER — FOR MORE THAN TWO DAYS THE BRAVE OLD CAPTAIN STOOD AT HIS POST WHILE THE SHIP TACKED AND WORE AND REACHED AND RAN, AND THE TIRELESS SAILORS TOWED AND KEDGED AND WET THE SAILS TO CATCH THE SHIFTING AIR—THOUGH ONCE HALF-SURROUNDED AND ONCE WITHIN RANGE, *OLD IRONSIDES* ELUDED THE WHOLE SQUADRON TILL A FRIENDLY SQUALL CAME TO WRAP HER IN ITS BLACK FOLDS AND CARRY HER FAR FROM DANGER.

As the story of the first cruise of the *Essex* shows how thoroughly the American seamen were drilled in that day, and, after a fashion, somewhat of their skill in the use of weapons, so the story of an adventure of another American war-ship—an adventure that occurred soon after the *Minerva* refused to fight the *Essex*—shows in a splendid light their skill and unwearied strength as seamen. This adventure was the escape of the *Constitution*, Captain Isaac Hull, from a British squadron off the Jersey coast—somewhat to the south, indeed,

of the modern racing ground between English and American crack yachts, but near enough to be worth mentioning.

The *Constitution*, after the Portsmouth incident, returned to Chesapeake Bay and was there cleaned and coppered. Before this work was done war was declared, but as soon as possible she was floated and a new crew shipped. This crew numbered, including officers, etc., four hundred and fifty. Of them Captain Hull wrote, at the time, to the Secretary of the Navy:

"The crew are as yet unacquainted with a ship-of-war, as many have but lately joined and have never been on an armed ship before. . . . We are doing all that we can to make them acquainted with their duty, and in a few days we shall have nothing to fear from any single-deck ship."

That is to say, the crew contained many green hands instead of experienced sailors like those on the British war-ships. But though inexperienced they were intelligent—they could learn readily, and they were to a man *willing*. A most important fact about the American crews at that time was that even the landsmen were willing and able workers. The experienced members of the crews, of course, fought with a will in very many cases because of their hatred of the British press-gang. But that does not account for all the excellent qualities of the

American crews. The Yankee was willing and able because he was the best-fed naval seaman in the world. The humane system of treatment, made imperative when the fathers of the nation were careful to provide that canvas for pudding-bags be served out at proper intervals, had been continued wherever American warships were found.

And it is worth noting in connection with this subject that when American and English ship-captains met socially during the interval between the Tripoli war and that of 1812 the English habitually sneered at the American system that gave the men plenty of good food and good pay, and prohibited an officer from striking a forecastleman, and limited the punishment by the lash to a dozen strokes, which could only be inflicted after a court-martial at that.

Leaving the capes of the Chesapeake on July 12, 1812, the *Constitution* beat her way slowly through light airs up the coast for five days. Then on Friday, the 17th, at 2 P.M., "being in twenty-two fathoms of water off Egg Harbor" (from twelve to fourteen miles offshore) "four sail of ships were discovered from the mast-head, to the northward and inshore—apparently ships-of-war." Captain Hull thought they were the American squadron under Commodore Rodgers, and so held on his drifting course. Two hours later the lookout saw an-

other sail. The others were northwesterly from the *Constitution*, but this one was in the northeast, and she was heading for the *Constitution* under full sail. But the fact that she was under full sail must not be taken as indicating that she was making any great headway. In fact, at sundown she was still so far off that her signals could not be made out.

However, this ship in the northeast was manifestly alone, and so Captain Hull stood for her. She might be a friend, but if she and the others were of the enemy it would be safer to attack the single one.

At about this time the breeze shifted to the south, and, wearing around, Captain Hull set studding-sails to starboard to help him along, and then as the light was fading in the west he beat to quarters. And thereafter with the men at their guns and peering through the ports for glimpses of the stranger the two ships drew slowly toward each other.

But they did not get together. At 10 o'clock Captain Hull hoisted his secret night-signal, by which American ships were to know each other, and kept it up for an hour. The stranger being unable to answer, it was plainly an enemy. Captain Hull had correctly concluded that the ships inshore were also of the enemy. So he "hauled off to the southward and eastward and made all sail."

Isaac Hull. vol ii, face p 54

From an engraving, at the Navy Department, Washington, of the painting by Stuart.

As the event proved, the lone ship for which the *Constitution* had been heading was the *Guerrière*, Captain Dacres, while the squadron in the northwest included the ship-of-the-line *Africa*, the frigates *Shannon*, *Belvidera*, and *Eolus*, and the United States brig *Nautilus* that the squadron had captured a short time before. The squadron was under Captain Philip Vere Broke, of the *Shannon*, and it had been sent out from Halifax immediately after the squadron of Commodore Rodgers had vainly chased the *Belvidera*.

Now, although Captain Hull headed the *Constitution* offshore, he did not by any means try to avoid the *Guerrière*. He held a course enough to the eastward to enable her to draw near. What he wanted was to draw her clear of the rest before he fought her. But in this he was not successful. At 3.30 o'clock the next morning (July 18th) the *Guerrière* was but half a mile from the *Constitution*, and the two were nearing each other hopefully, when the *Guerrière* saw for the first time the other ships spread out inshore in chase. At that Captain Dacres made the private British signal, but it was not answered because the captains inshore assumed that Dacres knew who they were — and that misunderstanding led these captains to say unpleasant things to each other afterwards.

Supposing that the failure to answer his signals was due to the ships inshore being Yankees, Captain Dacres wore the *Guerrière* around and ran away from the *Constitution* for some time before he discovered his mistake. Meantime the ships inshore had had the benefit of enough wind to bring them within dangerous distance of the *Constitution*, so that when the wind failed the *Constitution*, as it did at 5.30 in the morning, her condition was desperate. The *Guerrière* having once more entered the chase, there were four frigates and a ship of the line all spread out in such fashion as would enable them to take advantage of the slightest change in the direction of the wind, and three of them were less than five miles away. It was then that the most famous race between warships known to the annals of the American navy really began, for up to that time Captain Hull had not tried to avoid the *Guerrière*.

Seeing now that he must fly from all, Captain Hull called away all his boats, and running a line to them, sent them ahead, towing the *Constitution* away to southward. Although some little air was still wafting on the enemy they very promptly imitated the example of the *Constitution*. In fact, they did better, for the boats of the squadron were concentrated on two ships, and what with their aid and the faint zephyr blowing they gained rapidly on the

Constitution. In fact, at 6 o'clock the *Shannon*, which was in the lead, opened fire on the *Constitution*, her captain being of the opinion that she was within reach of the long guns.

The shot failed to reach, but the captain of the *Constitution* "being determined they

Africa. Constitution. Shannon. Eolus. Guerrière. Belvidera.

The *Constitution's* Escape from the British Squadron after a Chase of Sixty Hours.

From an engraving by Hoogland of the picture by Corné.

should not get her without resistance on our part, notwithstanding their force," ordered one of the long twenty-four pounders brought from the gun-deck up to the poop where it would bear over the stern at the enemy. A long eighteen was brought from the forecastle to do similar service, while two long twenty-fours were run out of the cabin windows below.

At 7 o'clock one of these long twenty-fours was tried on the *Shannon*, but the ball fell short. It did some good, however, for it

showed the enemy that their boats were in danger, and so prevented their towing fairly within gunshot.

But this by no means freed the *Constitution.* If they did not dare tow up within range astern, they could with their superior forces tow their vessels out on each side of her, and so far surround her as to absolutely prevent her escape when a wind did come, and the situation was apparently more nearly hopeless for the *Constitution* than at any time since the chase began.

In this emergency the wit of the "smart Yankee" executive officer of the *Constitution* —Lieutenant Charles Morris—gave the ship a new lease of life. Morris had had experience in towing a ship through crooked channels by means of a light anchor carried ahead with a line attached to haul on. This method of towing is called kedging. Dropping a lead-line over the rail, Morris found that the water was but one hundred and fifty-six feet deep, and suggested at once that they kedge her along.

A few minutes later the *Constitution's* largest boat was rowing away ahead with a small anchor on board, and stretching out a half mile of lines and cables knotted together. When that anchor was dropped to the bottom the men on the ship began to haul in on the line—to walk away with it at a smart pace, and the

speed of the *Constitution*, which at best had been no more than a mile an hour, was at once trebled. She was literally clawing her way out of trouble, clear of the enemy.

Meantime another kedge and a fresh line were made ready, so that by the time the crew had tracked the ship to the first anchor a sec-

Towing a Becalmed Frigate.

From a picture drawn and engraved by Baugean.

ond one was in the mud a half mile ahead and ready for them. In this way a substantial gain was made on the enemy, who lagged under the slower work of the men towing with small boats.

Finally, at 9.10 A.M., a light air was seen on the oil-smooth water in the south. The yards of the *Constitution* were at once braced sharp up to meet it, and by the time its breath had filled the sails the willing crew had the boats

alongside and hoisted out of the water—some to the davits where they belonged, and some lifted by spare spars, rigged over the rail, just clear of the water, where they could be dropped the instant they were needed.

But if the wind gave the sailors who had been on deck all night long a brief chance to rest, it was after all of more advantage to the enemy than to the *Constitution*. For she had had to change her course when the breeze came, and that change was sending her closer to the *Guerrière*, instead of further away. Worse yet, it seemed to the Yankees that their sails had no more than rounded full under the caress of the zephyr than it failed them again, and once more the canvas rattled and slapped the creaking spars.

The *Guerrière* now began firing, and there was nothing to do but once more to stretch out the lines with the kedge anchor and begin anew the tracking the *Constitution* ahead. For an hour the weary men stretched out their tow-line and hauled it in and stretched and hauled again. Captain Hull had lightened the ship by starting nine or ten tons of water, and the *Constitution* was just beginning to show a fair gain once more over the enemy when Captain Byron of the *Belvidera* saw how it was that the Yankees were clawing away, and adopted the same tactics.

Immediately this was done the boats from the fleet flocked with men to her deck to help haul in on the line—flocked there with men who were fresh and strong from the decks of the other ships, while the men of the *Constitution* were worn with the loss of sleep the night before and the fierce efforts of the morning.

By 2 o'clock in the afternoon these fresh men had drawn the *Belvidera* so near that she opened fire, and, although the shots fell short, Captain Hull now supposed he would surely be captured, and so prepared to make a good fight with the first ship in hope of disabling her before the rest could come to help. But the *Belvidera*, not wishing to risk her anchor-carrying boats within range of the *Constitution's* guns, was content to claw forward on the Yankee's quarter just out of range, while the *Shannon* and *Eolus* strove to help partially surround the *Constitution* once more.

The *Belvidera* began kedging at 10.30 o'clock in the morning. The *Constitution* had been at it for an hour already. Steadily the two crews labored at the heart-breaking task until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when once more a zephyr from the south roughened the oily waves and then lifted first the royals of the *Constitution* and then the top-gallant sails. The heavy canvas of top-sails and courses would

not swell to its weight, but the kites could pull her. It was a fitful, varying breath, but it lasted four hours, and during that time the Americans actually held the braces by which the sails were trimmed constantly in hand, while the brave old captain kept his eyes on the weather-vane and jockeyed her along as a racing skipper handles his yacht. It was a race for a stake such as has never been known on any coast, for it was a race for the life of a nation. Had *Old Ironsides* been captured while Rodgers was making his fruitless cruise, and imbeciles were leading worthless militia in a day-dream scheme of conquest toward Canada, the result would have been deadly.

As night came on (it was at 7 o'clock) this breeze failed once more. It then lacked less than an hour of a full day since the men had been called to quarters. For twenty-three hours they had stood at their guns, had made and taken in and trimmed sail, had lowered and rowed away and hoisted up boats, had carried out anchors and hauled on the cables till they gasped for breath. It had been a day to wear the life out of any ordinary man, but, as John Paul Jones said on the deck of the *Bonhomme Richard*, these could say now: "We have not yet begun to fight." In spite of weariness, the instant the zephyr failed them these men once more dropped the boats and

carried out the small anchors with the long lines and began again to claw their way clear of the enemy. Until 10.45 P.M. they worked with steady patience, and then another teasing zephyr came to fill the sails of the ship, and the boats except one were all hoisted clear of the water. During all this time the *Guerrière* and the *Belvidera* had fairly held their own, being aided by the men from the other ships. The *Shannon* had dropped back a deal, but the *Eolus* was not by any means far enough away to be ignored. But when the breeze came, the *Belvidera* got enough of the flaws of air to forge ahead, so that soon after daylight (at 4 o'clock) on the morning of July 19th she was well forward on the lee beam of the *Constitution*, and, tacking about, she stood for the Yankee. If the *Constitution* held fast as she was the *Belvidera* was sure to pass within easy gunshot astern and deliver a raking fire that would play havoc with spars and sails. If the *Constitution* tacked also, the *Eolus*, off on the Yankee's weather-quarter, would have a chance of forging within gunshot. The *Constitution* was cornered and a choice had to be made.

Going about at 4.20 A.M. on the other tack, Captain Hull headed across the bows of the *Eolus*. He was now steering out to sea, and to the joy of the Americans the sails swelled under a faint improvement in the

breeze. An hour later they were crossing ahead of the *Eolus* within range of long guns, but the Englishman did not open fire and the *Constitution* passed free. The *Eolus* when in the wake of the *Constitution* tacked, and then Captain Hull had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy once more all astern of him. It was not that he was out of danger. There were four frigates—the *Belvidera*, the *Eolus*, the *Guerrière*, and the *Shannon*—all after him, but he had escaped being surrounded. The line-of-battle-ship and the smaller craft had been left so far astern as to be out of the race.

For several hours after this the race was without incident, though so far as the eye could judge the *Constitution* gained slightly in the faint-air race, but at 9 o'clock a strange sail arrived within plain view to the southward. She was evidently bound to New York. To decoy her (for she looked like a Yankee) the *Belvidera* hoisted American colors, but Captain Hull stopped that game by hoisting the British ensign, whereat the merchantman braced up and escaped, while the *Constitution* slipped along with every thread drawing and the green water between her and the enemy slowly widening, until at noon the nearest one was estimated to be three and a half miles astern. The wide-beam, shoal-draft ship had the best of the race in a light air, as others have since

Chase of the *Constitution* off the Jersey Coast.

From the painting by Inch at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

had in races of less importance near the same ground.

The crew were now, for the first time, able to get some rest. Officers and men alike stretched out on deck and slept as men may who for thirty-six hours have worked for life, but the brave old sailor who commanded the ship stood to his post. Throughout the afternoon the lead of the *Constitution* was slightly increased, but at 4 o'clock the wind began to weaken, to the disadvantage of the flying Yankee, for she ran out of the breeze, and the enemy held it for a time after she lost it, and so drew up until within perhaps three miles. There was nothing to do now but get out all the boats to a tow-line, for the water was too deep for kedging.

And then came the last and most stirring event of the long race. A heavy cloud appeared away to southward and eastward, the first sign of one of the black squalls with which American coasters are over-familiar. A fearsome spectacle they are to the unaccustomed, nor do they lack weight of wind at any time, but to the men of the *Constitution* this squall was a Godsend.

Knowing very well what the Englishmen would think of the looks of the squall, Captain Hull kept his boats at their towing and sent the men about deck to the belaying pins, where

sheets and tacks and halyards were made fast, while others stretched out clew-lines and buntlines, and downhauls. Standing so with everything in hand, he watched the coming cloud until the frothing spoondrift was within a mile, and the first faint breath of it was lifting the royals, and then to the shrill pipe of the boatswain called the boats alongside. As they were hooking on the tackles the blast struck the ship. Over she heeled as if to go on her beam ends, lifting the boats to windward clear of the water, while the men at the halyards and sheets let go all, and all hands clapped on to the clew-lines and downhauls and boat-tackles. In a moment the last sail had been clewed into a bunt, and the boats to windward and leeward were snatched to the davits and spars rigged to receive them.

Turning then, to look at the enemy, he saw the men climbing aloft and with eager haste *furling* everything, while their boats were left to shift as they might in the foaming sea. They had supposed from what they saw of the effect of the squall on the *Constitution* that it was even worse than it looked, and they snugged down their ships accordingly.

And then, as the friendly rain and vapor of the squall veiled the wily Yankee, he spread his sails—sails that had not been furled—to the

gale and "went off on an easy bowline at the rate of eleven knots an hour."

The race was won. At 7.30 P.M., when the squall had passed and the enemy once more came in view, the leading ship, the *Belvidera*, was not only a long way astern, but she had the wind in such fashion as to be unable to hold up within two points of the course the *Constitution* was steering. And yet in their mad efforts to overhaul the Yankee after they felt the weight of the squall, the British captains had cut adrift their small boats, that they might not be obliged to stop and pick them up or be encumbered with the weight.

The winds proved light and baffling all night, but having observed how much better the sails held the air while they were wet, Captain Hull started his force-pumps at work to keep the lower sails wet, and sent men to the highest yards to draw up water in buckets and keep everything drenched to the highest thread. It was a plan that worked admirably. In spite of the baffling zephyrs, the Yankee gained all night, so that at daylight only the loftier sails of the enemy were visible, and at 8.15 on the morning of Monday, July 20, 1812, the British squadron gave it up and squared away for Sandy Hook, leaving the triumphant *Constitution* to head away to Boston to obtain another supply of water in place of that she had started to de-

crease her draft. From Friday afternoon until Monday morning the British frigates, including the swift *Belvidera* that had eluded the *President*, were in chase of the Yankee clipper. Certainly they showed "great perseverance, good seamanship, and ready invitation," but "the cool old Yankee" justified the praise which Lord Nelson gave us when he said, in the Mediterranean, that "there is in the handling of those transatlantic ships a nucleus of trouble for the navy of Great Britain."

The *Constitution* Bearing Down for the *Guerrière.*

From an old wood-cut.

CHAPTER V

THE *CONSTITUTION* AND THE *GUERRIÈRE*

THE BRITISH CAPTAIN COULD SCARCELY BELIEVE THAT A YANKEE WOULD BE BOLD ENOUGH TO ATTACK HIM, AND WAS SURE OF VICTORY IN LESS THAN AN HOUR, BUT WHEN THE YANKEES HAD BEEN FIRING AT THE *GUERRIÈRE* FOR THIRTY MINUTES SHE WAS A DISMANTLED HULK, RAPIDLY SINKING OUT OF SIGHT —"THE SEA NEVER ROLLED OVER A VESSEL WHOSE FATE SO STARTLED THE WORLD"—SUNDRY ADMISSIONS HER LOSS EXTORTED FROM THE ENEMY—A COMPARISON OF THE SHIPS.

HAVING noted, in the stories of the actions hitherto described, somewhat of the training, skill, and good-will of the American seamen in the use of naval weapons, and their masterful knowledge of seamanship, the time arrives for telling how one of these Yankee frigates won the first signal victory of the war—the victory of the *Constitution* over the *Guerrière.* But it will add to the pleasure of every American reader if the opinions which the British captain

expressed about his ship, both before and after the battle, be told before the battle is described.

At the time the *Guerrière* went into the fight she was commanded by Captain James Richard Dacres. In the course of the cruise during which the squadron under Broke chased the *Constitution*, Captain Dacres dined on board the *Shannon*. While pacing the deck of the *Shannon*, after dinner, and talking with Broke, Captain Dacres said emphatically of his ship:

"I say, she looks beautiful; and more, she'd take an antagonist in half the time the *Shannon* could."

On making full allowance for a captain's disposition to boast unduly of the qualities of his ship, it is still fair to say that Dacres considered her at any rate equal to the *Shannon*, although the *Shannon* carried more guns.

To strengthen this conclusion it may be added that Captain Dacres sent a challenge to Captain Rodgers of the *President*, which was a sister ship to the *Constitution*. Further than that we have the words of Captain Dacres when he was court-martialled for losing her: "I am so well aware that the success of my opponent was owing to *fortune*, that it is my earnest wish, and would be the happiest moment of my life, to be once more opposed to the *Constitution* in a frigate of similar force to the *Guerrière*."

These assertions must appear to every reader to be a confession of faith in his ship. Nor was Captain Dacres alone in his belief that she was a good one.

"The *Guerrière* is as fine a frigate as we can boast of," said the St. Christopher's *Gazette* in the same year, while lamenting her loss.

What the English newspapers thought of the *Constitution* before this battle with the *Guerrière* is also worth repeating. The opinions they expressed were, of course, a repetition of those expressed by British naval officers, who had visited her at various times, but notably after she had called at Portsmouth as related in a preceding chapter. They spoke of her as "a bunch of pine boards," and as "a fir-built ship with a bit of striped bunting at her mast-head," and "their opinions gave rise to various excellent jokes that were uttered in and out of the British Parliament at the commencement of the war."

To these statements must be added the further fact that the boastful captain of the *Guerrière* had taken the trouble to notify the Americans that his ship "was not the *Little Belt*," referring to the affair in which the *Little Belt* was so severely pounded by a Yankee frigate.

The *Constitution* sailed from Boston on August 2, 1812. Captain Hull had reported

his escape from the British squadron in a modest letter to the Navy Department, but he did not wait for further orders from the Secretary. He conjectured that his narrow escape would so frighten the timid officials, who had previously warned him in his official instructions not to voluntarily engage any superior force, that they would keep him lying inactive in port. In this conjecture he was entirely right, for a few days after he had sailed, orders to that effect did arrive. A good naval authority says that "had the *Constitution* been captured on the cruise, Hull would have been hanged or shot for sailing without orders." It has often been a matter of consolation to American naval officers in these last years of the nineteenth century to read of the incapacity and cowardice of department officials in the early years of it.

Having taken the risk, Captain Hull coasted along to the north as far as the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On August 15th five vessels were seen in a bunch, and on approaching them, four scattered away, leaving the fifth, a brig, on fire. One was chased and found to be an English merchantman in the hands of an American prize crew. Before night the American brig *Adeline* was overhauled and taken from the British prize crew found on board of her. On the night of the 18th a third vessel was overhauled after a smart race, and this was

an unfortunate affair, for she proved to be the American privateer *Decatur*, of fourteen guns, twelve of which had been thrown overboard in her mad race with the *Constitution*.

From the captain of the *Decatur* Captain Hull learned that a British frigate had been seen the day before steering to the southward under easy sail. On hearing that, Captain Hull crowded the canvas on the *Constitution* in chase of her.

There were light westerly breezes during the night and early morning following, but as the day wore on the breeze canted to the northwest and freshened until the *Constitution*, with all plain sail set, was bowling along at little less than the speed she attained in her spurt away from the fleet off Barnegat. Until after dinner nothing was seen, but before the 2-o'clock bell was struck the lookout astride the fore-royal-yard stirred the crew with the prolonged cry of

"Sail-ho!"

It is said that half the men about deck climbed into the rigging in their eagerness to see the stranger, and within a few minutes their curiosity was gratified, when it appeared plainly that she was a large ship steering to the southwest. So, with sheets eased, the *Constitution* headed away for her, and by half-past 3 o'clock the Yankee crew had not only learned

that she was a British frigate, but that her captain was ready to fight, for he set his flag and made no effort to get away.

The first measure of strength between a British and an American frigate—the battle between the *Guerrière* and the *Constitution*—was at hand.

Over on the *Guerrière*, Captain Dacres, when he first saw the *Constitution* boldly bearing down upon him, was doubtful about her character, and he was good enough to consult in the matter with an American prisoner whom he had on board—Captain Orne, of the American brig *Betsey*, captured some time before. The American skipper said it was a Yankee frigate that was coming. To this Captain Dacres replied that he thought she came down too boldly for an American, but added: "The better he behaves the more honor we shall gain by taking him." A little later, when the colors had been displayed, he called out to the crew:

"There is a Yankee frigate; in forty-five minutes she is certainly ours. Take her in fifteen and I promise you four months' pay."

This must have been said at about twenty minutes past 4 o'clock, for it was at that time that the English officers hoisted flags to every mast-head and opened fire, "more with a view to try the distance than for any effectual attack."

Action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*.—I.

From the painting by Birch, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

At that Captain Hull began to shorten sail on the *Constitution.* The breeze was steady and fresh, and the water fairly smooth. It was just the kind of weather he would have chosen for such a battle. All the light sails, including the top-gallant sails, were furled, the courses were hauled up to the yards, and the royal-yards were sent down. Then the top-sails were double-reefed, and as the men came down from the top-sail-yards the drums beat to quarters. Not many of the crew had ever been in battle, but "from the smallest boy in the ship to the oldest seaman not a look of fear was seen."

The enemy's first shots fell short, but the second round passed over the deck of the *Constitution,* though without doing any damage. A deal of what a yachtsman would call jockeying for position followed. The enemy squared away before the wind, and wore around until her port (left side) battery would bear, and then, as the *Constitution* was coming down the wind and following close after her, she wore back till her starboard (right side) battery would bear. As she turned from side to side she fired on the *Constitution.* The *Constitution* replied with an occasional shot from a bow-gun. The enemy was twisting about to avoid being raked by the *Constitution,* and was firing to cripple the enemy's rigging. But all that the twisting amounted to was to keep the *Guerrière* at

"long balls"—out of range of the shorter guns of the *Constitution.* To end that kind of work Captain Hull spread his maintopgallant sail and foresail. Impelled by these, the *Constitution* began to forge within close range, and the projectiles from the *Guerrière* began to come on board. One big shot through the forward bulwarks knocked no end of splinters across the deck, and some of them pierced several of a gun's crew hard by. The men were eager to return the fire, but Captain Hull paced the quarter-deck, saying nothing. A rousing cheer from the British crew came over the water as they saw that they had hulled the *Constitution.* Lieutenant Morris walked aft, and said to Captain Hull:

"The enemy has opened fire and killed two of our men. Shall we return it?"

"Not yet, sir," replied Captain Hull. The captain was waiting for a shorter range. Twice more Lieutenant Morris, to ease the minds of the impatient gunners, walked aft to ask permission to fire, and each time received the same answer. The *Guerrière* had meantime steered away before the wind; the clipper stem of the Yankee was overreaching the Englishman's quarter only a few yards away from it; our guns were brought to bear, and then stooping till "he split his knee-breeches from waistband to buckle," Captain Hull straightened up again

Action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*.—II.

From the painting by Birch, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

to his full height and shouted in a voice heard all over the ship :

"Now, boys ; pour it into them !"

With a yell they obeyed. The broadside was as a single explosion. The crash of the iron balls through the splintering timbers of the *Guerrière* came back as an echo, and as she rolled with the swell the blood of the dead and

The *Constitution* in Close Action with the *Guerrière.*

From an old wood-cut.

wounded gushed from her scuppers. The Yankee gunners had aimed as if feeling still the claws of the British cat in their backs.

It was at 6.05 A.M. that this first broadside was fired from the American ship. For fifteen minutes the roar of the cannon and the rattle of musketry, and the crash of solid shot that struck home were incessant. The ships were literally yard-arm to yard-arm, rising and sinking over the long swells as they drove away be-

fore the wind. The British in mad haste pulled their lanyards and fired the moment their guns were primed. The Americans loaded in haste, but paused each time until their gun-sights ranged on hull or spar, and then they fired.

At 6.20 A.M. a big round shot from the *Constitution* crashed through the mizzen-mast of the *Guerrière*, and away it went, over the rail to starboard. Snatching off his hat, Captain Hull waved it above his head.

"Hurrah, my boys! we've made a brig of her!" he shouted.

They had done more. The mast was still held by its rigging, and, dragging in the water, it brought the *Guerrière* around partly across the wind. The *Constitution* forged ahead, swung her yards, ported her helm, and ranging across the enemy's bows gave her a raking broadside. The *Guerrière's* main-yard came tumbling down, shot through at the mast. Then, swinging around before the wind, the Yankee brought her port battery to bear and gave the *Guerrière* a second raking. So close together were the two ships now that the *Guerrière's* bowsprit came poking over the quarter-deck of the *Constitution*. A man on the *Constitution* reached out of a cabin port and placed his hand on the enemy's figure-head. The *Guerrière's* bowsprit fouled the *Constitution's* port mizzen rigging and the bow-chasers of the *Guerrière* began to

Action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière.*—III.

From the painting by Birch, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

play havoc with the cabin of the *Constitution*, which was soon on fire from blazing wads.

As the men on the *Constitution* ran to extinguish this fire Captain Dacres on the *Guerrière* called away boarders, intending to climb along his bowsprit to reach the *Constitution's* quarter-deck, but when he saw the men on the *Constitution* ready to receive him he thought differently about it. The Yankees then thought to board,

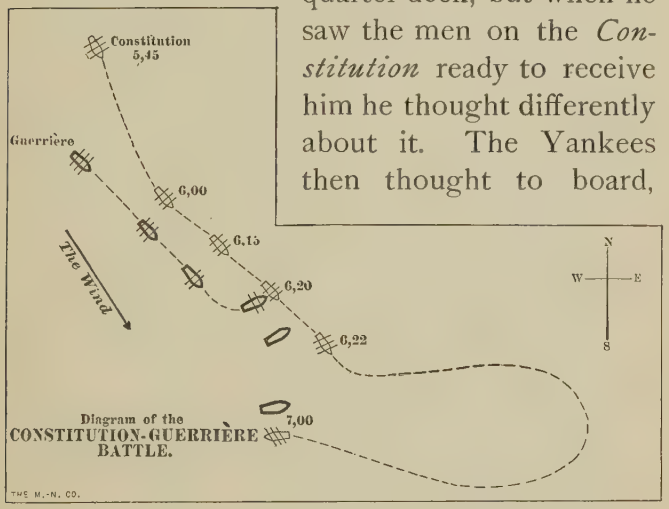


Diagram of the CONSTITUTION-GUERRIÈRE BATTLE.

NOTE.—The accounts of the manœuvres differ widely, but it is agreed that the real fighting began at 6 o'clock with the *Constitution* on the port quarter of the enemy. When fairly abeam, the mizzen-mast of the *Guerrière* fell over to port, according to Allen, and dragged her nose up to the starboard side of the *Constitution*; when the *Constitution* drove clear the two remaining masts of the *Guerrière* fell. The *Constitution* after repairs to her rigging, returned at 7 o'clock.

and brave Lieutenant Bush, of the marines, jumped on the rail for the honor of leading the way, and there was shot dead by a British marine. For a few moments the two ships hung together, sawing up and down, while

the bulk of each crew was massed for boarding and the topmen on each ship poured a galling fire into the other. Lieutenant Morris was shot through the body and Master Alwyn was but little less severely wounded. Captain Hull climbed part way upon the rail, but a big Yankee seaman dragged him back unceremoniously, and begged him not to do that unless he first took "off them swabs"—pointing to the captain's gold epaulets. A sailor who fired a pistol at one of the enemy and missed him, threw the pistol with better, though not fatal, aim. He hit the fellow in the breast. And then the flag at the *Constitution's* mizzen-truck was shot down. The enemy cheered, but John Hogan shinned up and replaced it, although a number of British marines fired at him steadily all the time he was exposed.

At last the larger spread of canvas on the *Constitution* pulled her clear, and then, as she began to swing around into position to open fire again, both the main and the foremast of the *Guerrière* that had been badly cut by the American shot went over the rail with a crash, and there she lay a helpless hulk.

It was then exactly 6.23 o'clock, or about two hours since the firing of the first gun from the *Guerrière*. But from the time that the *Constitution* fired her first broadside, it was less than thirty minutes.

Action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*.—IV.

From the painting by Birch, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

Veering off for a brief interval, the *Constitution's* crew made hasty repairs to the rigging, and then came back with guns loaded. They found the *Guerrière* in the trough of the sea rolling her main-deck guns under water with every passing swell.

The *Constitution* had been at her less than thirty minutes, but all three of her masts had been shot away, and were dragging over the rail by such of the shrouds as had not been cut by the shot of the Yankees. Her hull was knocked into a sieve by the Yankee round-shot. Thirty of these projectiles had penetrated her more than four feet below the water-line. The cool Yankee gunner had watched her rolling her side out of water and then aimed his gun at the copper below the water-line. Out of a crew of two hundred and seventy-two, twenty-three men were dead or mortally hurt, and fifty-six were more or less severely wounded—more than one-fourth of her crew had been hit in that brief time. On the *Constitution* seven men had been killed and seven wounded, while her hull had scarcely been touched below the bulwarks.

The *Constitution* was ready for an all-night battle. The *Guerrière* was ready only for the torch. She was "a perfect wreck." She could not be carried into port and had to be burned.

There was no flag flying on the *Guerrière* when the *Constitution* returned to her, and so Third Lieutenant George Campbell Read was sent off in a boat to hail her. Pulling under her lee quarter he found Captain Dacres leaning over the rail, and asked him if he had surrendered. According to the careful Maclay the following conversation took place—when Captain Dacres replied:

"I don't know that it would be prudent to continue the engagement any longer."

"Do I understand you to say that you have struck?" asked Lieutenant Read.

"Not precisely," returned Dacres, "but I don't know that it will be worth while to fight any longer."

"If you cannot decide, I will return aboard my ship and we will resume the engagement," said the American officer.

To this Captain Dacres called out somewhat excitedly: "Why, I am pretty much *hors de combat* already. I have hardly men enough left to work a single gun, and my ship is in a sinking condition."

"I wish to know, sir," peremptorily demanded Lieutenant Read, "whether I am to consider you a prisoner of war or an enemy. I have no time for further parley."

Captain Dacres replied with evident reluctance: "I believe now there is no alternative.

Sir James Richard Dacres.

From an English engraving published in 1811.

If I could fight longer I would, with pleasure; but—I—must—surrender."

Read continued:

"Commodore Hull's compliments, and wishes to know whether you need the assistance of a surgeon or surgeon's mate?"

"Well, I should suppose you had on board your own ship business enough for all your medical officers," replied Dacres.

"Oh, no," said Read, blithely, "we had only seven wounded, and they were dressed half an hour ago."

The end of it was that Captain Dacres was carried on board the *Constitution*. He had been wounded, but was able to climb the rope-ladder to her deck, and there he found Captain Hull awaiting him. It was a notable meeting in more ways than one—physically among the rest. For Hull was short, rotund, and jolly—very much like our portraits of John Bull—while Dacres was tall, lank, and serious—not much different from a typical New Englander. Hull helped the beaten captain to the deck, saying heartily: "Dacres, give me your hand, I know you are hurt." A moment later Captain Dacres made a formal offer of his sword, but Hull refused it.

"No, no," he said, "I will not take a sword from one who knows so well how to use it; but I'll trouble you for that hat."

This apparently incongruous remark was due to the fact that when Dacres had met Hull socially before the war he had offered to bet a hat that the *Guerrière* would whip the *Constitution* if they ever met, and Hull accepted the bet.

It was on the afternoon of August 21, 1812, that the wreck of the *Guerrière* was fired and blown to the four winds of heaven by the triumphant Yankees, and from that day to this the naval writers of both England and America have been trying to tell how it was that the *Guerrière* was so badly beaten in so short a time. A half-dozen different explanations may be found in the books of any great nation, and all are very much alike, even though written by partisans. They give the details of the battle, how the ships approached each other; how they veered and wore; how the crews cheered; how they fired the guns; how the splinters flew; how the blood flowed from the scuppers—of one ship; how with great reluctance the one surrendered. Then with one accord the writers set to work to examine the hulk of the *Guerrière.* Was it sound or rotten? They counted the guns. How many did each ship have in a broadside? They measured the calibres of the guns. They weighed the projectiles. "Why, blow me, sir! The *Constitution* had long twenty-fours to our eighteens!" "All right, but by gosh, our shot were seven per cent. under weight!" They considered the gunpowder chemically to see whether or not it had deteriorated on the *Guerrière.* They counted the crews. They considered every little detail.

As we look back at a distance of eighty-five years upon the battle it must seem to a candid student of naval matters that the excuses and the explanations were hardly worthy of the great peoples engaged in making them. Nevertheless, because it is the conventional thing, these details shall be given here:

The *Constitution* measured (Roosevelt's account) 1,576 tons; the *Guerrière*, 1,338. The *Constitution* could fire 27 guns in a broadside, throwing 684 pounds of metal (actual weight); the *Guerrière*, 25 guns, throwing 556 pounds of metal. The *Constitution* carried 456 men; the *Guerrière* but 272. The *Constitution* lost, as already told, 7 killed and 7 wounded; while the *Guerrière* lost 23 killed and 56 wounded—over one-fourth of her crew. The comparative force of the ships rated by these standards, was as 100 to 70; the comparative casualties were as 18 to 100. To this may be added that the relative injury to the ships was as 100 to nothing.

Arguing from these figures the British writers say that the *Constitution* was "a seventy-four-gun ship of the line in disguise." "Why should not any American feel proud of that assertion?" For if it be so, the old Quaker ship-builder of Philadelphia was not only the greatest ship-builder in America, but in the whole world. When the British officers

called her so they confessed that when they had called her "a bunch of pine boards" they were mistaken. They confessed that they had been utterly incapable of judging the fighting worth of the *Constitution*, although they had gone over her and examined her carefully.

The British point to the fact that our most powerful projectiles came from twenty-four pounders, while theirs were from eighteens. Here again they confess their own inability to arm a ship. They had for twenty years been fighting the navies of Europe. Out of the experience there gained they had decided that the long eighteens were the best calibre for the main-deck battery of a frigate. The last frigates launched from British ship-yards previous to this battle were armed with long eighteens. The British officers who inspected the *Constitution* from time to time before the war of 1812 ridiculed the idea of trying to fight with long twenty-fours. The long twenty-fours were "too heavy!" But when their best frigates had been defeated by the Yankees they began to weigh the projectiles and learned that their defeat was due to the much ridiculed twenty-fours.

If the British had carried their investigations into the size of the shot a trifle further—to the mechanism of the guns, for instance—they would have learned something of real signifi-

cance. They would have seen that the cannon of the *Constitution* were *furnished with sights.* The *Guerrière* lost her masts not by accident, but because *the cool Yankee gunners could aim their weapons accurately.*

But the most important—rather the most pleasing of all the confessions in the British explanations after defeat is that relating to the superior numbers of the American crews. The count showed 456 individuals on the *Constitution*, and 272 on the *Guerrière.* To contend, as the British writers do contend, that the "superiority on the American side" was "in number of men as—nine to five," is to admit that man for man, an American naval seaman, in spite of his lack of experience, was the equal of the tar-stained, cicatrice-marked British seaman ; and that was a confession which Americans in those days (not now) were most anxious to extort.

But the British writers did not stop at this confession. They went further and admitted all the most boastful Yankee could have wished. They said (*vide* the British *Naval Chronicle*), that "the few on board an American ship-of-war that are designated as *boys* are as old and stout as most men employed in our service."

And the last of all is the confession of the same periodical that "had the *Guerrière's* men been half as well skilled in the use of great

guns as the *Constitution's* were, the proportion of killed and wounded would not have been so great nor one ship made a complete wreck of while the other suffered no material injury in hull or rigging."

> Isaac did so maul and rake her
> That the decks of Captain Dacre
> Were in such a woful pickle
> As if Death, with scythe and sickle,
> With his sling or with his shaft
> Had cut his harvest fore and aft.
>
> Thus, in thirty minutes, ended
> Mischiefs that could not be mended;
> Masts and yards and ship descended
> All to David Jones's locker ——
> Such a ship, in such a pucker!

So sang the old-time Yankee rhymester of the ship that "was not the *Little Belt.*"

The British Admiralty boards eventually threw aside their prejudices, and adopted long twenty-fours with sights on them in place of unsighted long eighteens. They have done even more than that, for when in these last years the swift armored cruiser *New York*, with her eight-inch rifles in turrets, was added to the American navy, giving us the most powerful cruiser in the world, they at once laid down four armored cruisers that were larger in displacement and carried more powerful engines, thicker turrets, and a more powerful armament than the *New York.*

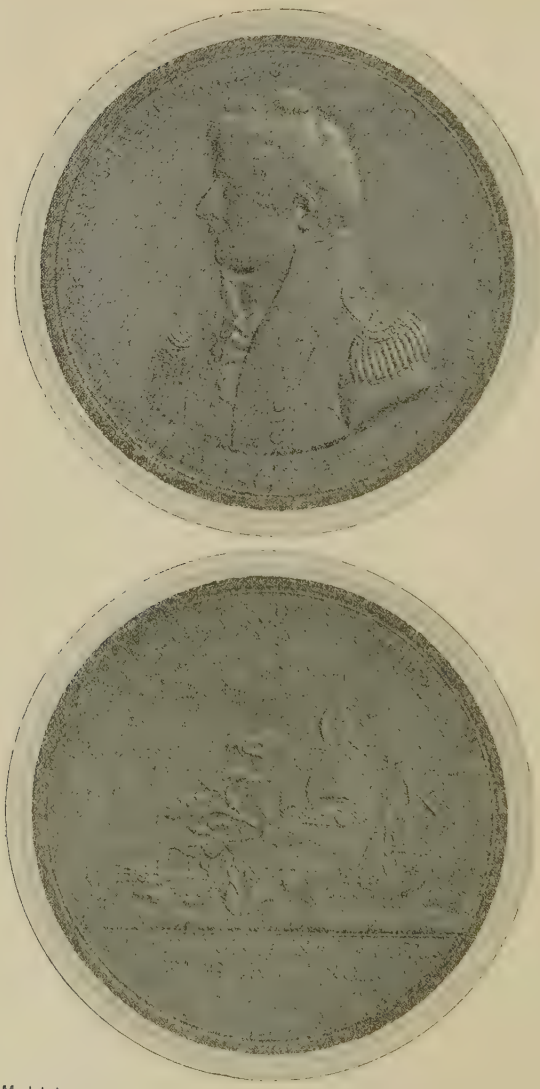
During the night after the battle the boats were kept busy transferring the prisoners from the wreck to the *Constitution*. Ten kidnapped Americans were found among her crew, but the humane Dacres had not compelled them to fight against their own flag. A sail was seen steering south at twenty minutes past two o'clock, and the *Constitution* cleared for action, but the vessel passed on, and soon disappeared. At daylight the lieutenant in charge of the wreck hailed to say she had four feet of water in her hold and appeared to be in danger of sinking, but she kept afloat until afternoon, when she was set on fire, and at 3.15 P.M., on August 21, 1812, the flames reached her magazine and she was blown to pieces. "A huge column of smoke arose and stood for a long time in the calm atmosphere, and then slowly crumbled to pieces, revealing only a few shattered planks to tell where the proud vessel had sunk. The sea never rolled over a vessel whose fate so startled the world."

It is worth noting, perhaps, that the father of Captain Dacres of the *Guerrière* was the Captain James Richard Dacres who commanded the schooner *Carleton* on Lake Champlain at the time of the fight with Arnold's haymakers, and that both father and son became admirals in the service.

As it happened, the *Constitution* reached

Boston most opportunely. Detroit had been surrendered to the British without a single shot having been fired in its defence. Fort Dearborn, too, that stood where Chicago now stands, had been taken by the Indian allies of the British and the garrison massacred. Instead of triumphantly wresting Canada from the British Crown, as the foolish politicians in Congress had proposed to do, the American militia had been beaten back and the Canadians seemed in a fair way to annex all the United States domain lying west of the longitude of Lake Erie. The people had hoped for nothing from the navy. The Administration had even sent orders to Captain Hull to remain in port, but Hull had sailed before the orders arrived, and now returned with the crew of the *Guerrière* —the British frigate that had sailed up and down the coast, kidnapping American citizens and flaunting her identity in the face of all America by painting her name across her foretopsail.

The *Constitution* appeared off Boston Light on August 30th, dressed in fluttering bunting. Look-outs along shore saw and understood these signals, and horsemen, wild with enthusiasm, galloped into the city. Cannon roared from every fort as she sailed up the harbor, and flags were flung to the breeze from every masthead. The people in thousands gathered at the long



Medal Awarded to Isaac Hull, after the Capture of the *Guerrière* by the *Constitution.*

wharf to welcome her. A banquet was given to the officers in Faneuil Hall, where the venerable John Adams, the first advocate of a national navy in the old Colonial Congress, presided. Congress voted a gold medal to Captain Hull and silver medals to the commissioned officers, and $50,000 to the whole crew. A piece of plate was given to Lieutenant Morris by his townsmen. The citizens of Portland, Maine (Falmouth), gave a sword to their townsman, Lieutenant Alexander Scammel Wadsworth. Virginia gave swords to Midshipmen Morgan and Taylor. The people had looked upon the navy with doubt; they had seen with anxious fear the *Constitution* sail away. But now the whole nation went wild, and the song of the exultant poet rang wherever the people gathered:

Ye tars of Columbia, whose glory imparts
New charms to the blessings your valor secures,
Oh! high be your hopes and undaunted your hearts,
For the wishes and prayers of a nation are yours.

CHAPTER VI

FOUGHT IN A HATTERAS GALE

WHEN THE SECOND YANKEE *WASP* FELL IN WITH THE BRITISH *FROLIC*—THEY TUMBLED ABOUT IN THE CROSS SEA IN A WAY THAT DESTROYED THE BRITISH "AIM," BUT THE YANKEES WATCHED THE ROLL OF THEIR SHIP, AND WHEN THEY WERE DONE THEY HAD KILLED AND WOUNDED NINE-TENTHS OF THE ENEMY'S CREW AND WRECKED HIS VESSEL—THE *FROLIC* WAS A LARGER SHIP, CARRIED MORE GUNS, AND HAD ALL THE MEN SHE COULD USE, "FINE, ABLE-BODIED SEAMEN," SURE ENOUGH!

Of glorious memory was the little Yankee sloop-of-war *Wasp*. Though carrying the rig of a ship—square sails on three masts, she was of the size of one of the smaller schooners that in these days cruise along the United States coast. She measured, that is to say, four hundred and fifty tons. But being built to a different model, she stood somewhat higher out of water than the schooners do. Her guns included sixteen short thirty-twos and two long twelves. Her commander in 1812 was Captain Jacob Jones, a Delaware sailor who had worked his way up, beginning as a midshipman under Captain Barry.

Jacob Jones.

From an engraving by Edwin of the portrait by Rembrandt Peale.

On October 13, 1812, the *Wasp* sailed from Philadelphia, bound eastward to lie in wait in the track of British merchantmen in the voyages from the West Indies. She had on board one hundred and thirty-seven men, including marines, but two of her sailors were lost overboard in a gale of wind on the 15th. They were at work on the jib at the time. The

Wasp in plunging down a wave buried her bowsprit under water, and when she rose out of it the bowsprit was broken off and the men carried away.

For two days the gale blew hard, making an ugly sea, and then on the night of the 17th moderated somewhat, although the wind was still properly called a gale. That night at half-past eleven o'clock several lights were seen, showing that a number of vessels were weathering the storm together, and Captain Jones hauled to the wind, where he could keep his eye on them. When daylight came he found there were six large merchantmen under the convoy of a big brig. Although the brig was plainly as large as the *Wasp*, and some of the merchant ships carried guns, Captain Jones reefed down his topsails to fighting trim, sent his topgallant-yards down on deck and squared away for the fleet. As was afterwards learned the ships were a part of a fleet of fourteen bound from British Honduras to England, and the brig was the *Frolic*, Captain Thomas Whinyates. The fleet had been separated by the storm and the *Frolic* had sprung her mainyard. She was making repairs when morning came, but as the Yankee bore down on the fleet the *Frolic*, under a fore-and-aft mainsail, fore-topsail and a jib, bore up to meet her.

So heavy was the gale and so short the can-

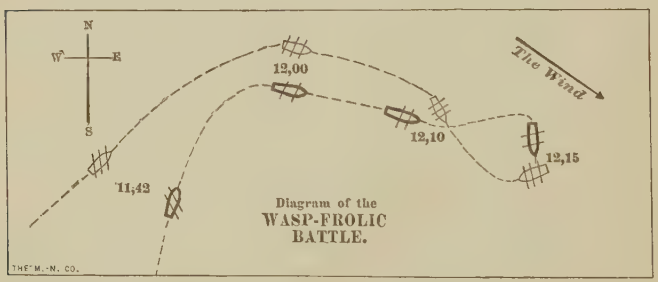
vas under which the ships had to work, that it was not until after 11 o'clock that they got within fighting distance, but when there, the Englishman hoisted a Spanish flag. This little trick did not deceive the Yankee, however, for he held his course, and very soon the two vessels were within sixty yards of each other and were steadily drawing nearer, both running almost before the wind, but not quite, the Yankee having a little the better of it, being a little to windward.

For a brief time they ran so in silence, and then Captain Jones stepped to the rail and hailed. For an answer the Englishman hauled down his Spanish flag, hoisted his red cross of St. George, and as the one came down and the other fluttered aloft, fired a broadside—fired it just as a fierce flaw of wind struck his sails to heel him over.

The Yankees waited till their vessel began to roll from the crest of a wave toward the enemy and then fired a broadside in return.

It was a battle off Cape Hatteras in the tail end of a Hatteras gale. The ships rolled and pitched over the heavy cross seas, and wallowed through the hollows. The crews, as they loaded their guns, saw the long rammers pointed to the clouds at one roll, and saw them dip in the spoondrift that rose to the port sills at the next. The muzzles of the guns were even dipped into

the smother of it at times. The spray from the wave-crests in great masses splashed over the bulwarks. The smoke from the guns was snatched away by the gale, leaving clear targets for the gunners, who, from the excitement of it all, swabbed, and rammed, and fired—who shouted as they hauled out their guns to aim, and cheered as they fired their iron hail across the tossing seas. The roar and whizz of the gale were whelmed in the thunder of the broadsides and the scream of projectiles.



They swabbed, and rammed, and fired in frantic haste under the red cross — fired the moment the muzzles of the guns were hauled out through the bulwarks. Under the "grid-iron flag" they loaded in haste and then calmly waited till the roll of the ship was right to make each projectile do its appointed work. The Englishman fired three broadsides by count to two of the Yankees, but scarce a projectile from the enemy struck the Yankee's hull.

Nevertheless some damage was done by British projectiles. Within four minutes after the first broadside a shot struck the *Wasp's* maintopmast not far above the cap and over it went like a tree before a hurricane. The yards fell across the fore braces and "rendered the head-yards unmanageable." Ten minutes later (11.46 A.M.) the mizzen-topgallant-mast was shot off and "at twenty minutes from the beginning of the action every brace and most of the rigging was shot away" on the *Wasp*.

But both vessels were driving along before the wind. The impulse of the gale upon their rigging was strong enough to give them steerage way. But the cutting away of the two masts on the *Wasp* left her in such plight that the enemy had only to wear ship and haul to the wind on the port tack to escape. Some kinds of sea-fighters would have done that quickly, but not those of the Anglo-Saxon blood.

The Englishmen held their course and blazed away. The *Wasp* having been squared away by the falling of the mainmast, drew forward and somewhat across the bow of the enemy, and the distance between them lessened until at last the men who were loading two of the broadside guns of the *Wasp* felt their rammers strike the bluff of the enemy's bows as they

reached out to swab their guns. A moment later the ships came together with a crash, and then as they wallowed together in the trough of the sea two of the *Wasp's* guns pointed fairly through the bow ports of the enemy and along her gun-deck. At that instant the order to fire was given and it was obeyed before the waves could shift the position. The slaughter of that raking fire was terrible.

With the send of the next wave the *Wasp* forged ahead until the bowsprit of the enemy fouled in the mizzen rigging of the *Wasp* and the two ships were held together in an embrace that seemed likely to tear both to pieces. The men of the *Wasp* had wished to board the instant the ships collided, but were then held back to fire a broadside. Now they would be restrained no longer. Without waiting for orders one, Jack Lang, a brawny fellow from New Brunswick, New Jersey, took his cutlass in his teeth, and grasping the rigging about the bowsprit of the enemy swung himself upon that spar. Captain Jones, of the *Wasp*, who wished to fire another broadside, bawled to him to come down but Jack had been impressed in the British service—he had a score of his own to settle—and he did not obey. And a dozen or more of his shipmates were hurrying from their guns to join him. The enthusiasm of the men could scarcely be restrained and the

The *Wasp* Boarding the *Frolic*.
From an old wood-cut.

Captain let them have their way, giving the order to board.

Lieutenant Biddle jumped on the bulwarks to lead the boarders, but because of the surging of his ship he got his feet caught among the hammocks. Little Midshipman Baker, who was entitled to second place, being too small to jump to the top as Biddle had done, saw Biddle's coat-tails flopping in the gale and grabbed hold of them to help himself up. He got part way up when another surge of the ship threw both of them violently back to the deck.

All this time Jack Lang was alone on the enemy, but Biddle soon regained the top of the bulwarks, and then, followed by others, crossed over the enemy's bowsprit. He found Jack Lang standing alone on the topgallant forecastle and looking away aft over the enemy's deck.

At the wheel on the quarter deck stood a grizzled quarter-master, bleeding from a wound, but firm in staying at his post. Beyond him in a group at the taffrail stood three officers, two of whom were wounded. And that was all. Not another living man could be seen, though there were dead enough strewn about the deck, and the water that came in through the scuppers, deeply reddened by their blood, swashed to and fro over them and up the painted bulwarks at every roll.

The flag of the enemy was still flying, but as Lieutenant Biddle and his men started aft the three officers at the taffrail threw down their swords in token of surrender, while one buried his face in his hands and turned away. So Lieutenant Biddle himself hauled down the flag and reported the surrender of the ship to Captain Jones.

When the Americans came to examine their prize they were astonished at the result of their gunnery. The lower deck was simply covered over with wounded men. The *Frolic* had carried a crew of one hundred and ten all told, and less than twenty of them remained unwounded. Captain Whinyates and Lieutenant Frederick B. Wintle were among the wounded, and another lieutenant and the master were among the killed. Whinyates and Wintle were so badly wounded that they were obliged to

From an original water color, by H. Rich at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

James Biddle.

From an engraving by Gimbrede of the portrait by Wood.

lean on the taffrail for support when the *Frolic* was boarded. Only their pluck kept them from going below. The masts of the *Frolic* were so badly cut that the mainmast broke off at the deck soon after the two vessels drifted apart, and the foremast twelve feet above the deck. Her hull was full of holes.

Because of the tremendous destruction wrought—because nine-tenths of the enemy's

crew had been counted among the casualties, the time required for this destruction is the most interesting fact of the battle. The first broadside was fired at 11.32 A.M. Lieutenant Biddle hauled down the enemy's flag at 12.15. Just forty-three minutes had elapsed, and the *Frolic* was a wreck, with barely enough men left unhurt to navigate a sound merchantman of her size into port. And that was done while both ships were rolling and plunging about in a cross sea!

It is particularly interesting to compare the *Wasp* with the *Frolic*. The facts are that the *Wasp* measured 450 tons and the *Frolic* 467. The *Wasp* could fire nine guns, throwing 250 pounds of metal at a broadside, and the *Frolic*, ten guns throwing 274 pounds. This is the lowest British estimate of her guns. Captain Jones after looking carefully over his prize reported officially that she carried twenty-two guns, throwing 292 pounds of metal. Jones had no reason for misrepresenting the matter in his report. Captain Whinyates makes no mention of guns in his. The *Wasp* carried 135 men, and Allen, the British historian, says they were "fine, able-bodied seamen." It is quite certain that they were as fine as any afloat. But to assert that they were all experienced seamen is to tell a falsehood. They were an ordinary Yankee crew.

The *Frolic* carried 110 men and Allen says they were "worn down by long service in a tropical climate." No one need dispute this, even if they did fire three broadsides to the Yankee's two. The *Wasp* had but five men killed and five wounded, nearly all of whom were struck while aloft. They tumbled from the tops and rigging like squirrels shot from the limbs of a tree.

To sum it up, the two ships were as nearly equal in force as any two ships meeting at sea were likely to be in those days. The British ship was somewhat the more powerful, for she had "all the men we could use," as Captain Whinyates put it; and she carried more guns and threw more metal than the American.

The fact is this victory made such a deep impression upon the minds of the British officials that they were led to a most extraordinary proceeding in order to modify the effect it was likely to have upon the British public as a whole, and consequently upon the fortunes of the political party then in power in Parliament. The report of the fight was garbled before it was given out to the press. The account given out said that "the *Wasp* measured 434 tons and the *Frolic* 384," so "the tonnage of the *Wasp* gave her an immense advantage" in the heavy sea-way. Allen, the British historian, prints the garbled reports of the battle in the

work already quoted, although the official registers of ships would have given him the facts. Allen, however, but follows James in this matter.

Having placed a prize crew on the *Frolic*, Captain Jones began the work of repairing the damage done aloft with a view of overhauling some of the merchantmen that had formed the convoy. As he began this work a sail was

Medal Awarded to Jacob Jones, after the Capture of the *Frolic* by the *Wasp*.

seen rising above the horizon to windward and the crew made haste with the work, at first, for they thought it might be one of the convoy. But when the sails were fairly in view they gave over the task, for it appeared that the ship was a big man-o'-war. A little later still they learned that it was the *Poictiers*, a seventy-four, commanded by Captain John Poer Beresford. The victory over the *Frolic* was to be of no value to the United States save

through its moral influence. Both the *Frolic* and the *Wasp* were carried to Bermuda, and it was there that the garbled report of the fight was written.

The *Wasp* was taken into the British navy under the same name, but she was lost at sea without having accomplished anything.

What the first American *Wasp* did has already been related in the story of the naval actions of the Revolution.

Captain Jones and his crew, having soon been exchanged, returned home, where they were received with the honors due to "fine, able-bodied seamen" who had thrashed an enemy in such thorough fashion. The Congress voted $25,000 to them as a reward, and Captain Jones was soon placed in command of the frigate *Macedonian*, which was captured from the enemy, as will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

BROUGHT THE *MACEDONIAN* INTO PORT

STORY OF THE SECOND FRIGATE DUEL OF THE WAR OF 1812—THE *MACEDONIAN* WAS A NEW SHIP, AND HAD BEEN BUILT WITH A FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE YANKEE FRIGATES—WHIPPED, BUT NOT DESTROYED—ESTIMATING A CREW'S SKILL BY THE NUMBER OF SHOTS THAT HIT—SUPPOSE THE ARMAMENTS OF THE SHIPS HAD BEEN REVERSED—IMPRESSED AMERICANS KILLED WHEN FORCED TO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR OWN FLAG—"THE NOBLEST SIGHT IN NATUR'"—A FIRST-RATE FRIGATE, AS A PRIZE, BROUGHT HOME BY BRAVE DECATUR—ENTHUSIASTIC CELEBRATIONS OF THE VICTORY THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

Of all the battles between American and British ships there was none so often discussed, and none so well remembered among American seamen, previous to and even after the civil war, as that between the *United States*, commanded by Captain Stephen Decatur, and the *Macedonian*, commanded by Captain John Surnam Carden. And the reasons for this were that it was a well-fought battle, the victory for the Americans was well won, and the *Macedonian* was brought into port, and for many years she carried the Stars and Stripes

proudly — flaunted the flag in the faces of British officers in a hundred different parts of the world, and at the last was sent to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, where, as a practice ship for the midshipmen, she not only strengthened their muscles and increased their knowledge, but she stirred their patriotic souls in a way that no other ship could have done.

On October 8, 1812, Commander Rodgers, sailed from Boston with the *President*, the *United States*, the *Congress*, and the *Argus*, but the squadron separated four days later, the *President* and the *Congress* taking one course, and the *United States* and the *Argus* another. A little later still the *Argus* held to an easterly course, while the *United States* headed away for a cruise between the Azores and the Canary Islands.

Meantime the British frigate *Macedonian*, a ship that was built of oak, and had been afloat less than two years, had sailed from England, bound south, and in the course of her voyage put in at Madeira for a supply of the wine that in those days was as popular among drinking people as the sparkling French wine is in this. While there Captain Carden heard that the American frigate *Essex* was expected to cruise between the Madeiras and the Canaries, to intercept British commerce, and at this

the *Macedonian* was headed for that ground to capture the audacious Yankee.

On Sunday morning, October 25, 1812, the *United States* was cruising along under easy sail about half-way between the Azores and the Canary Islands. It was a beautiful day. A stiff southeasterly breeze swept through the rigging. The sunlit sea was flecked over with racing white-caps and purpled in broad fields wherever the shadows of the fluffy clouds fell upon it. It was just the kind of a day when a good seaman could handle a frigate as a yachtsman might handle a catboat.

Very early in the day a sail was seen broad off on the weather beam, and it was not very long after this that the lookout observed that she was making sail in chase of the *United States*. This stranger was the *Macedonian*, and her master was coming down the wind with the hope that he was to encounter the *Essex* of which he had heard. As the *Macedonian* made sail in chase, the *United States* made sail to meet her. Private signals were made on the *Macedonian*, to see whether it really was an enemy and as these were not answered, the crew were called to quarters and the ship cleared for action.

As the ships approached each other their manœuvres became of great interest to seamen, but a landsman finds them hard to follow.

Capture of the *Macedonian.*

Victory obtained by the U. S. ship United States of 44 guns over his Britannic Majesty's ship Macedonian of 38 guns. The action continued 90 minutes, in which the United States had 6 men killed, 7 wounded—the Macedonian had 36 killed, 68 wounded.

This much, however, is plain, the *Macedonian* came down with the wind. She could choose her own position. She might have closed with the *United States* and brought every gun into action. Her first lieutenant wanted to do this, but her captain, either from the belief that he was fighting the *Essex*, that had short guns only, or because he was afraid the Yankee would luff up to windward of him, or both (the accounts differ), chose to hold on a course almost parallel with the *United States*, and fight at long range.

Meantime, Captain Decatur had been trying to get to windward, but found the *Macedonian* too swift and handy to permit that. So he spread his colors from every peak, and prepared to fight where he must.

Soon after 9 o'clock, Captain Carden ordered three of his long guns fired at the *United States*. The balls skipped over the long waves and fell into the sea harmless. A manœuvre to close the interval between the ships followed. A broadside from the *United States* was fired back. Most of these fell short, but one whistled over the Englishman. Some minutes of silence followed, during which the Yankees luffed and the Englishman sagged off from the wind, and then the range having been found, the gunners stripped off their shirts, and bare-headed, or with handkerchiefs tied to

keep their hair from their eyes, they began to work their long batteries.

For a half hour thereafter that was as hot a fight as two such frigates ever made. So swiftly did the Yankees work their guns that, not only did they envelope their ship in smoke faster than the smart wind could blow it away, but they led the Englishmen to believe that the *United States* was actually on fire; and this word was passed along the gun-deck of the *Macedonian* to encourage the men. They cheered at it—all but six or seven did—as they had cheered at every round of their guns.

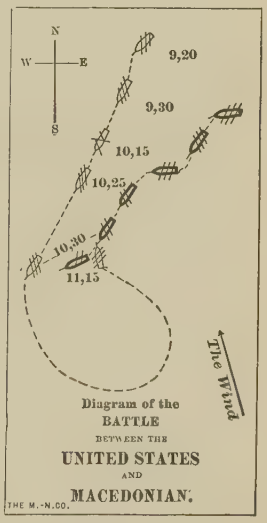
They thought they saw our ship in flame,
Which made them all huzza, sir;
But when the second broadside came
It made them hold their jaws, sir.

If the second broadside didn't make them "hold their jaw" others did. Their cheers were a mockery, and in a rapidly increasing number of cases were turned to shrieks and groans. The Yankees, peering through the sights of their long twenty-fours, were hulling the *Macedonian* at every round, in spite of wind and rocking waves.

"Our men kept cheering with all their might," said Samuel Leech (quoted by Maclay) who was one of the *Macedonian's* crew. "I cheered with them, though I confess I

scarcely knew what for. Grape-shot and canister were pouring through our port-holes like leaden hail; the large shot came against the ship's side, shaking her to the very keel, and passing through her timbers and scattering terrific splinters, which did more appalling work than the shot itself.

"The slaughter among the boys of the *Macedonian* was one of the most painful incidents of the battle. One of the lads supplying the sixth and seventh guns had his leg taken off by a cannon-shot, while the other was struck in the ankle by a grape-shot, and had to have the leg amputated. A Portuguese boy who was supplying the quarter-deck guns had nearly all the flesh on his face burned off by an accidental explosion of the cartridge (bag of powder) he was carrying, and as the agonized lad lifted both hands, as if imploring relief, a cannon shot cut him in two.



NOTE.—The *Macedonian* had the weather-gauge, and held it until after losing her mizzen-mast at about 10.25 A.M., when the *United States* forged ahead, tacked about, and returned to find the *Macedonian* with fore and main top-masts gone, and ready to surrender.

"A man named Aldrich had his hand taken

off by a shot, and the next instant another tore open his bowels in a horrible manner. Two or three of his ship-mates caught him as he fell, and threw him overboard while he was yet alive.

"Some of the men were so dreadfully mangled with splinters that the surgeon pronounced their cases hopeless, and they were taken on deck and thrown into the sea, where their groans, prayers, or imprecations were quickly hushed by the surging waters."

Over on the *United States*, matters were in no wise gloomy. One of the boys, the son of a sailor, who had died in the ship, who was so young that his name had not been put on the register of the crew, went to Captain Decatur before the battle began and asked that it be added to the list, regardless of his age. When asked why he was so urgent, he said:

"So as I can draw my share of the prize-money, sir," he said. The captain laughed at the lad's confidence in the ship, and ordered it done. His name was John Kreamer, and he eventually reached the rank of lieutenant.

As the battle raged, Captain Decatur walked about the gun-deck to see for himself how everyone was working. It is recorded that he stopped at one gun, and said:

"Aim at that yellow streak along her side. Her spars and rigging are going fast enough. She must have a little more hulling."

Battle Between the *United States* and the *Macedonian.*

From an engraving by Duthie of the drawing by Chappel.

A little further on he heard a gunner say to a crew-mate after the *Macedonian's* mizzen-topmast fell :

"Hey, Bill. We have made a brig of her."

"Take good aim, my lad, and she will be a sloop," said Captain Decatur. And a sloop she became very soon after, for her main-top-mast followed the mizzen.

The injury done to the British ship was in proportion to the number of casualties among her crew. Hardly had the battle opened in earnest before the mizzen-topmast was cut by a round shot, and came crashing down before the wind, to fall with its weight of yards and rigging into the maintop and so hold fast the braces of the main yards. But for almost half an hour Captain Carden kept his ship off at long range. He has been accused of "timidity or bad judgment" for doing so. Certainly he was not timid, and as for his judgment it was simply that of the British Lords of Admiralty. He and they really believed the long eighteens of the *Macedonian* were superior to the long twenty-fours of the *United States*. When this belief was knocked out of him by the twenty-four-pound arguments, so to speak, of the Yankees, he endeavored to close in. This has been called rash, but that is not a fair word. The case was desperate. He would surely be whipped where he was, and there might be

hope at short range. He grasped at this chance as his duty demanded and the instincts of a brave man directed. Putting up his helm, he headed for the *United States*, end on, and ordered boarders to be called away. His men were as brave as he was. They responded with cheers, and some who were wounded even came rushing forward. But their courage was all in vain.

As the *Macedonian* turned, the Yankees braced their main-yards aback to hold the *United States* in waiting for the enemy and blazed away with a raking fire. The bow-guns of the *Macedonian* were quickly disabled and she luffed up and fired with her broadside guns as they were brought to bear. But the Yankee filled away and luffed when she did, and eased away again as she eased away, all the time delivering a fire that was fearfully destructive to the British crew. Then, once more the *Macedonian* was luffed and this time a shot cut her lee fore-brace and the yard at once swung around until the sails came aback and threw the Englishman off to leeward in such a position and at such close range that the Yankee gunners fairly swept her decks with their projectiles from both short and long guns. Her fore-topmast was cut away at the cap. The main-topmast followed. The lower masts were slashed and splintered, and the rigging and sails

were rendered almost wholly useless. Only the foresail remained serviceable and that was badly torn. Every gun on the forecastle was disabled, and all but two on the quarter-deck were in like condition, while two of the main-deck battery were destroyed. The *Macedonian* had become a wreck, wholly unable to continue the fight, and at 11 o'clock the *United States* ceased firing. She had lost her mizzen-topgallant-mast, but was otherwise so little hurt that she had forged up across the bows of the *Macedonian* so far that no guns would bear.

At this Captain Decatur eased off to give his sails a good full, and the British crew, seeing him do so, cheered. They supposed another frigate might have appeared and that the *United States* was running. But their hopes were vain. The *United States*, having made swift repairs to braces and other rigging, tacked about and came back to the wrecked Englishman. Captain Carden called a council of his officers. The impetuous Lieutenant David Hope urged that they fight till she sank, but more sensible councils prevailed, and as the *United States* ranged across the stern of the *Macedonian* the Englishmen hauled down their flag.

The battle had lasted one hour and a half all told, but the actual fighting, excluding the earlier shots fired "more to test the distance than to do injury," lasted only an hour.

Seeing the enemy's flag hauled down, Captain Decatur sent Lieutenant John B. Nicholson to take charge of her, and afterward visited her himself. It was a mournful state of affairs that they found, even though they were flushed with victory. The officers and crews were fairly well acquainted with each other, for the *Macedonian* had been in Norfolk before the war when the *United States* was there and several visits had been exchanged. Lieutenant Nicholson on going into the ward-room found the surgeon at work there.

"How do you do, Doctor?" he said.

The surgeon looked up quickly at the sound of a familiar voice, and then, recognizing the lieutenant, said :

"I have enough to do. You have made wretched work with us."

And Captain Decatur, in writing of the scene when he first boarded her, speaks of the "fragments of the dead scattered in every direction, the decks slippery with blood, one continuous agonizing yell of the wounded. A scene so horrible of my fellow-creatures, I assure you, deprived me of very much of the pleasure of victory."

To add to the horror of the spectacle, some of the crew, taking advantage of the inevitable disorder, broke into the spirits-room and quickly got hilariously drunk. And so, singing and

The Battle Between the *United States* and the *Macedonian.*

(Drawn by a sailor who was on the *United States.*)

From the original drawing at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

shouting and screaming, they went reeling about the decks, falling and smearing themselves with blood, and rising to sing and shout again in drunken glee, until enough of the American crew had come to confine them.

Nor does that tell all that the victors found to stir their feelings. Among the dead were two whose story must not be forgotten, for they were impressed Americans. As the Stars and Stripes first fluttered from the gaff of the *United States* (before the battle began) seven of the seamen of the *Macedonian* asked permission to speak to the captain. The following is a list of these men as literally copied from the muster-roll of the *Macedonian*—copied after the battle, of course—together with the name of one other man whose case was of interest in like fashion :

"Christopher Dodge, American, aged thirty-two, prest by the *Thisbe*, late *Dedaigneuse*, shipped in the *Macedonian* July 1, 1810.

"Peter Johnson, American, aged thirty-two, prest by the *Dedalus*, entered August 24, 1810.

"John Alexander, of Cape Ann, aged twenty-nine, prest by the *Dedalus*, entered August 25, 1810.

"C. Dolphin, of Connecticut, aged twenty-two, prest by the *Namur*, late *Ceres*, entered August 4, 1810.

"Major Cook, of Baltimore, aged twenty-

seven, prest by the *Royal William*, late *Mercury*, entered September 10, 1810.

"William Thompson, of Boston, aged twenty, prest at Lisbon, entered January 16, 1811, drowned at sea in boarding an American.

"John Wallis, American, aged twenty-three, prest by the *Triton*, entered February 16, 1811 (killed in action in the *Macedonian*).

"John Card, American, aged twenty-seven, prest by the *North Star*, entered April 13, 1811 (killed in action in the *Macedonian*)."

John Card, "as brave a seaman as ever trod a plank," was spokesman for the seven men, and on going to the mainmast asked that he and his countrymen be not compelled to fight against their flag.

Carden drove them back to their places. Then he stationed midshipmen with drawn swords at intervals, and marines with loaded muskets around every hatch, and these he ordered to kill every man who attempted to leave the guns or to pass below without authority. And so it happened that when the victorious Americans boarded the *Macedonian* they found John Card and John Wallis dead beside the guns.

James says that Captain Carden allowed the Americans to go below. If a deliberately written falsehood is ever creditable to a man this one is certainly to the credit of James.

After a brief inspection of the *Macedonian*, Lieutenant Nicholson carried Captain Carden over to the *United States*. Decatur, "wearing an old straw hat and a plain suit of clothes which made him look more like a farmer than a naval hero," met him at the head of the ladder. Stepping to the deck Carden offered his sword to Decatur in the usual form.

"No, sir," said Decatur; "I cannot receive the sword of a man who has so bravely defended his ship. But I will receive your hand," he added, and shook hands cordially with the defeated captain.

Decatur is described as a man "five feet ten inches high, and had a somewhat slender figure, a long face, prominent, restless eyes, dark skin, and black hair."

When the captors came to reckon the losses, they found their own were trifling. The *United States* carried four hundred and seventy-eight people all told, out of which number Lieutenant John Messer Funk and six seamen were killed, and five only were wounded. The ship had lost her mizzen topgallant-mast, and some of her yards were slashed a little. Her rigging was cut up somewhat, but only three round shot struck her hull.

On the *Macedonian* forty-three were killed, including two lieutenants, while sixty-one were wounded, of whom one was the undaunted First

Lieutenant David Hope, who was severely hurt. So more than one-third of her crew were in the list of casualties, in spite of the long range. As already told, the ship was practically dismasted and more than one hundred round shot had struck her hull, passing through her side below the water-line—an exhibition of marksmanship not to be forgotten by any naval seaman.

Inevitably a comparison of the forces of the two ships must be made. The *United States* (according to Roosevelt) fired twenty-seven guns throwing 786 pounds of metal at a full broadside; the *Macedonian* fired twenty-five guns throwing 547 pounds of metal. The crew of the *United States* numbered four hundred and seventy-eight and that of the *Macedonian* three hundred and one. James asserts that the *Macedonian* carried an unusual percentage of boys, and that the *United States* carried but one boy who was seventeen years old. Now, what could have been the state of mind of the English officers when they reported at home that all of the dozen and odd twelve-year and thirteen-year old powder-monkeys on the *United States* were seventeen years old or older?

Because we know just how many of the shot of the enemy struck the Yankee ship, and approximately how many of our shot struck the enemy, it will be of interest to return once

more to the stock argument of the British historians who continuously assert that their frigates were whipped by the superior size of the Yankee guns. They point to the fact that the *United States* fired 786 pounds of metal at a broadside, while the *Macedonian* fired only 547 pounds. Therefore, they say, the *United States* whipped because of this preponderance. It was by no means, if they are to be believed, because the Yankees were abler naval seamen. But an unbiassed student of history is likely to point to the record of shots striking each ship as furnishing figures very much more significant than those relating to the preponderance in weight of metal thrown. The British hulled the Yankee but three times. Suppose she had had twenty-four pounders instead of eighteens. Those three shots would then have made three holes (allowing for "windage") each 5.657 inches in diameter. The aggregate areas of the holes was 72.66 square inches. Suppose the *United States* had carried eighteen-pounders, she would have made more than 100 holes in the *Macedonian*, each 5.141 inches in diameter. The aggregate area of the 100 holes in the *Macedonian* would then have been 2073.39 square inches. So the real damage inflicted, even had the armament been reversed, would have been as 2,073 is to 73.

Surely, this computation of the areas of the

holes made is quite as pertinent, to say the least, as the weighing of the shot. The combined holes made by the *Macedonian* equalled one hole eight inches wide and nine long. The aggregate of those made by the *United States* almost equalled a single hole four feet square.

The truth is, none of the figures of the defeated ones or of those who strive to explain away the figures which the defeated bring forward, are of more than trifling importance. If any one wants to know of how little importance was the difference between the long eighteen and the long twenty-four, let him consider whether a modern rifle of half the bore of either would not have been more serviceable, say than ten of either. It was not the size of a hole that a gun could make, but the number of holes that the crew behind it could make with it in an enemy. The crew of the *United States* made more than one hundred holes in the British hulk and got but three in return. With this hard fact in mind, what must a candid student say was the relative efficiency of the two crews as naval seamen?

To make this matter of the relative efficiency in that day of the English and American naval seamen still clearer, it is worth considering the size of the target at which the Englishmen fired and missed so often. The *United States* stood as high out of water as the second-story

windows of ordinary dwellings in any of the large American cities. She was as long as the combined fronts of, say seven houses, standing in a solid row. Incredible as it may seem, it is really a fact, that although the *Macedonian* was no further away than across the street from this big target, and fired repeatedly at that range with the whole broadside, she only landed three shot in the target. Now what kind of gunners were they that they couldn't hit a two-story house when firing at "half pistol-shot" range?

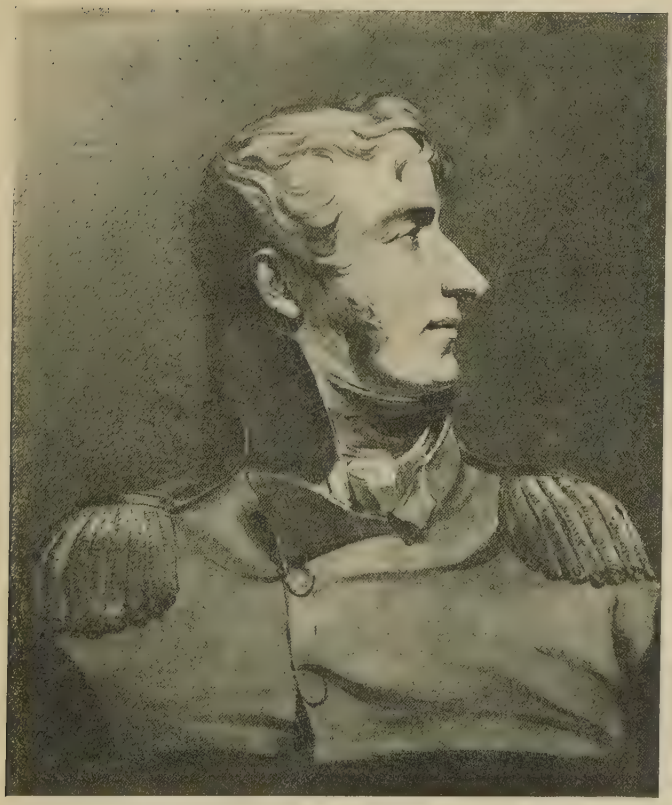
It was not for lack of practice either, for Executive Officer David Hope, under the date of June 22, 1824, wrote that "in no ship in the British service could there have been more attention paid to the practical part of gunnery than was done to the crew of the *Macedonian*. The men were not only well trained, but the greatest attention was paid to every department relating to the guns." That was in 1812. They do things in different fashion in the British navy now, and they know how to shoot guns and how to hit targets as well.

It is interesting at this point to recall a remark made by Captain Carden of the *Macedonian* when dining on board the *United States* at Norfolk before the war. He had been pointing out the superiority of such frigates as the *Macedonian* to any others afloat—had told how

much more rapidly and accurately their long eighteens could be handled than the American's long twenty-fours—how much more metal they would drive into an enemy in a given time and how much handier in every way the *Macedonian* was than the *United States*, when he closed by saying:

"Besides, Decatur, though your ship may be good enough, and you are a clever set of fellows, what practice have you had in war? There is the rub!"

The truth is, as was said in telling of the *Constitution-Guerrière* fight, the British Lords of Admiralty knew all about the size of the *Constitution*, the *United States* and all the rest of the American ships. They knew the number and size of guns carried. The *United States* was launched at Philadelphia on July 10, 1797. She had been afloat fifteen years when she whipped the *Macedonian*, and the *Constitution*, her sister-ship, had been afloat but a few weeks less. The British officers had often inspected them, and yet through their obstinate faith in the superiority of their own knowledge they built the *Macedonian* in 1810, fully believing she was a fair match for any frigate afloat! After the war of 1812 had taught them something they built their frigates on "exactly the same plan" of the long-despised model of Joshua Humphreys, the Philadelphia Quaker.



Stephen Decatur.

From the portrait by Thomas Sully, at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

It is now proper to defend the British seamen as a class from a charge made by every British historian—the charge that in this war they deserted their flag in such great numbers to join the American ships as enabled the American commanders to fill all the important

petty offices, such as that of gunner, or boatswain's mate, etc., with experienced British men-o'-warsmen. They assert repeatedly that from one-third to one-half of the crack American crews were British subjects who had deserted from the British navy. They go further. They quote from a letter written by Decatur who therein mentioned the fact that many of his crew on the *United States* had served under Nelson and other famous British officers. This quotation is made to prove conclusively to their minds that the efficient members of the American crews were British subjects.

When the American student comes to examine the facts in this matter he is sure to be either indignant or amused, but most likely he will be amused. For the truth of the matter shows the most remarkable condition of affairs known to the history of navies. It is literally true that in some of the American crews from one-third to one-half the men had served in British ships ; *they were the American citizens who had been made the victims of the British press-gangs.* What the British writers call deserting was the escape of the slave to his own country. The greatest number of British-born men in any American crew was thirty-two. That number was in the *Chesapeake* the day she was whipped.

But not to prolong this matter, the spirit of

the British writers can best be illustrated by a quotation from Allen's "Battles of the British Navy," regarding the five impressed Americans who survived the battle when the *Macedonian* was captured. These men were invited to sign articles on the *United States*, and they did so. Not another soul of the captured crew was asked to do so. But Allen says:

"Every temptation, and even threats were used to induce the crew to enter the American service, but the overtures were treated with the *disdain they merited.*"

And this in the face of the fact that the *Macedonian* had sailed with eight "prest" American seamen.

As to the prize, she was a long way from her new home and she was almost a wreck. How bad her condition was shall be told by quoting the words of the Yankee-hating James when he says that "with the profusion of stores of every sort which was to be found on board the American frigate, with so many able seamen that could be spared from her numerous crew, and with all the advantages that a fortnight's calm weather gave, it took the whole of that time to place the prize in a seaworthy state—a clear proof how much the *Macedonian* had been shattered."

The picture of the two ships rolling to the long, low swell of the sunny sea while the Yan-

kee tars hove up new spars, and set up new back-stays and shrouds, and rove off new running gear, and bent on new sails—while they knotted and spliced, parcelled and served, hoisted and fitted, and whistled and sang at their work—that is something to remain long in the mind of a sailor-man.

When, after two weeks of such work, the *Macedonian* was put in charge of First Lieutenant W. H. Allen (he who with a live coal snatched from the galley-stove fired the only gun on the *Chesapeake* when the *Leopard* attacked her) and on December 4, 1812, they anchored in New London, after which they proceeded to New York by the Hell Gate passage.

Then quickly met our nation's eyes
The noblest sight in natur'—
A first-rate frigate as a prize
Brought home by brave Decatur.

If the American people had heard of the triumph over the *Guerrière* with enthusiastic delight, how shall we tell of their feelings when Decatur brought a new British frigate into port. The full story of the welcome extended to the Yankee crew would fill a decent volume. Among the midshipmen was a son of Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton. He had "served with signal bravery" and was sent with the *Macedonian's* flag to Washington. He ar-

rived in the evening when, as it happened, the official society people of the capital were attending a grand ball. Going directly from the stage-coach to the place where the dancing was going on, the lad wrapped the captured colors about his shoulders and marched into the midst of the brilliant throng. The people went wild at his coming with the news that he brought, and the men gathered him up on their shoulders and cheered till the hall trembled. And then they put him down on the floor and let him run, as he had wished to do all the time, to the arms of his mother, who was there in the room. The flag was handed to the wife of President Madison, who had been present at the ball all the evening.

A ball was given at the "swellest hotel in New York," Gibson's, to Decatur and his officers on the night of January 2, 1813, and on the night of the 7th a banquet was given to the crew. The decorations at the banquet were all wonderfully nautical, one feature being a model of the *United States* floating in a tank of grog. The men filed in and took their places to the pipe of the boatswain's whistle, while the band played "Yankee Doodle." The men cheered the band. An alderman made "a handsome address" and the men cheered the alderman. The boatswain replied and they cheered the boatswain. And then came the event of the night.

As the boatswain sat down, a ship's sail forty-six by thirty-six feet large, that had been spread at one end of the room, was suddenly brailed up, revealing a huge picture of the three victories that American ships had so far won. The crew gave one look, recognized their own ship triumphant over the *Macedonian*, and leaping to their chairs, and even upon the table before

Medal Awarded to Stephen Decatur, after the Capture of the *Macedonian* by the *United States*.

them, "they gave vent to three savage yells of victory."

The Congress gave Decatur a gold medal and each of his officers a silver medal. States and municipalities hastened to vote swords, resolutions and receptions. Lieutenant Allen was promoted. Eventually the *United States*, the *Macedonian* and the *Hornet* were fitted for sea and sailed through the Sound, but they met a British squadron of two seventy-fours and a frigate, and were obliged to take refuge in New

London. Only the *Hornet* succeeded in escaping the blockade thereafter maintained, and what she did will be told further on.

As for the rest of the American squadron that sailed under Commodore Rodgers with the *United States*, it should be said that Rodgers in the *President*, with the *Congress* as a consort, chased the British frigate *Nymphe* on October 10, 1812, but failed to catch her. The Yankee frigates, it will be observed, did not prove faster than all of the British frigates, as it had been hoped they would do. The two captured a prize on the Banks of Newfoundland on October 18th that had $200,000 in coin on board. Then they chased the frigate *Galatea*, and failed to catch her, and eventually, on December 31st, came into Boston after having taken nine prizes.

The *Argus*, next to the *United States*, won most glory. After parting from the *United States* she cruised eastward and captured six prizes, one of which she took and manned while a British squadron was in chase of her. The enemy arrived so near that they opened fire, but by cutting away anchors and boats and starting some water, she escaped, although the chase lasted during three days and three moonlight nights. She reached home on January 3d.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN THE *CONSTITUTION* SANK THE *JAVA*

THE BRITISH HAD PLENTY OF PLUCK, AND LAMBERT WAS A SKILFUL SEAMAN; BUT HIS GUNNERS HAD NOT LEARNED TO SHOOT, WHILE THE YANKEES WERE ABLE MARKSMEN—THE *JAVA* WAS RUINED BEYOND REPAIR—PROOF THAT THE BRITISH PUBLISHED GARBLED REPORTS OF BATTLES WITH THE AMERICANS—THOUGH TWICE WOUNDED, BAINBRIDGE REMAINED ON DECK—WIDE DIFFERENCE IN LOSSES—STORY OF A MIDSHIPMAN—WHEN BAINBRIDGE WAS A MERCHANT CAPTAIN.

On the morning of December 29, 1812, the *Constitution*, Commodore William Bainbridge commanding, was cruising along the coast of Brazil under short sail, about thirty miles to the southward and eastward of the old city of Bahia (then called San Salvador). A gentle breeze, a swirl, perhaps, of the southeast trades, was blowing from the north and east, and the long, low swells of the sea were roughed and flecked over with the tiny, white-capped waves that delight the eye of the sailor in tropical seas. The *Constitution* had sailed from Boston some weeks before in company with the

Hornet, bound on a long voyage for the destruction of the enemy's commerce, and the *Essex* had sailed from the Delaware at about the same date, intending to join these two in the waters where the *Constitution* was now cruising. Of the doings of the three ships up to the day mentioned something will be told further on, but at 9 o'clock on this morning the look-out on the *Constitution* hailed the deck and announced two sails to the north and inshore. As the event proved, the two sails were ships, one the British frigate *Java*, Captain Henry Lambert, and the other the American merchant ship *William*, that had been captured two weeks before that time. As the crew of the *Constitution* watched the two sails it was observed that one of them was making sail in chase, while the other headed away on a different course, and it was therefore plain that the coming ship was a man-o'-war looking for a fight.

Billet-Head of the *Constitution*.

From the original at the Naval Institute, Annapolis.

An hour later the *Java* was near enough to read signals, and she spread to the breeze a variety of small flags—the private ones by which the British ships were to recognize each other. These, of course, could not be answered on the *Constitution*, but Commodore Bainbridge a little later hoisted the American private signal. When this was not answered, Commodore Bainbridge eased away his sheets and ran off to the southeasterly to get further off shore, where he could have abundant sea-room. This was done at about 11 o'clock. The *Java* at once headed after her, taking a course that would keep the weather-gauge, and for two hours that was what a yachtsman would call a very pretty ladies'-day race, with the honors (sad to relate, so far as a race is to be considered) all with the *Java*. She was much the swifter vessel.

However, after his men had had their dinner and a comfortable smoke, Commodore Bainbridge cleared the ship for action and hoisted the American ensign to three prominent points, and his own pennant and the Union Jack as well. By the time all was ready the enemy had arrived within long range, and at fifty minutes past 1 o'clock he squared away to run across the *Constitution's* stern and deliver a raking fire. At that the *Constitution* squared away also. So the *Java* luffed up once more

on the port tack, followed by the *Constitution*, and then, at exactly 2 o'clock, the firing began.

The *Java* was estimated to be half a mile away. Whatever the exact distance, it was almost the limit of range, for when the *Constitution* opened fire, first with one gun and then with a broadside, the shots from her long twenty-fours fell short. The enemy soon replied, and with a better estimate of the distance, for her projectiles landed, and killed and wounded several of the *Constitution's* crew. A continuous fire followed—a fire that filled the air with a covering fog of smoke that all but hid each ship from the eyes of the other crew.

Meantime the *Constitution* was luffing up and the *Java* running free and forging steadily ahead. The ships were soon within musket range. Commodore Bainbridge, a six-foot man, broad-shouldered and brawny, was pacing the quarter-deck, watching the enemy. He was an excellent target for the British marines, and they improved their opportunity. A musket-ball struck him in the thigh and stopped his pacing. But it had missed both bone and artery, and going to the wheel the commodore leaned upon the frame and continued to command his ship.

Reaching forward until off the *Constitution's* port-bow and almost clear of her guns, the

Java squared away to cross the bows of the *Constitution*. The *Java* was admirably handled, but the *Constitution*, though not so swift, was in as able hands, and around she too came in ample time to prevent a raking.

Both ships were now headed to the westward. To the eye they were in two cumulous, lightning-ribbed clouds on the sea, drifting along before the wind. They were now at a range where the short guns of both ships could be used with thorough effect, and it was a hot fight for a few minutes until the *Java* again forged ahead, and then she once more tried as before to cross the Yankee's bows and rake her. Putting up her wheel her stern swung away from the *Constitution* while her bow turned down, bringing her guns to bear diagonally across the *Constitution's* decks. Instantly her gunners fired a broadside, and one big round-shot struck the *Constitution's* wheel, knocking it to pieces and, worse yet, driving a copper bolt deep into the leg of Commodore Bainbridge.

A brave old sailor-man was Commodore Bainbridge. The bullet in his thigh was ample excuse for going below, and now he had received a still more painful wound. But no thought of leaving the deck entered his mind. The bolt was cut from the wound and a bandage applied, when the commodore was again in

the full swing of battle—indeed he had directed the movements of his ship while the surgeon attended the wound.

The *Java* was heading down across the *Constitution's* bows, but the *Constitution* was kept turning as rapidly as needed. Her wheel was gone, but there was a tiller below decks with tackles to handle it, and a line of midshipmen passed the word from the quarter-deck to the men at the tackles.

Around came the two ships, and now as they stood to the eastward with their yards braced on the port tack, their head sails began to show clear of the towering smoke-clouds. "The *Java* kept the weather-gauge tenaciously, fore-reaching a little." She could choose her position. If the *Constitution* tried to close the distance she would have to point her bows well-nigh straight at the broadside of the *Java* and so receive a raking, perhaps half a dozen, before getting yard-arm to yard-arm, but at last Commodore Bainbridge determined to take the risk and close, happen what might. Sheeting home the fore- and main-sails he put down his helm and stood up at pistol range on the *Java's* lee beam. Had the gunnery of the *Java* at this time been at all worthy of the ship, the *Constitution* would have suffered frightfully. But the fact was the Englishmen blazed away like a "tenderfoot" when he sees

his first deer in the Adirondacks—they blazed away, not knowing whether their guns were aimed at high heaven or the depths of the earth. On the other hand, the American gunners in this battle were not a little like a grizzled Adirondack guide out for meat. As the *Constitution* ranged up under the *Java's* lee every shot told.

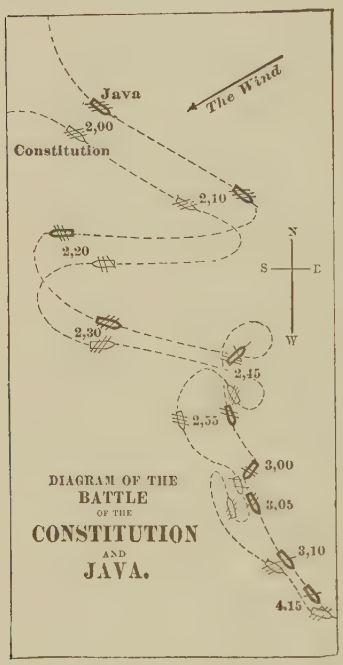


DIAGRAM OF THE BATTLE OF THE CONSTITUTION AND JAVA.

At this Captain Lambert of the *Java* decided to board the *Constitution*, and headed down toward the Yankee, who was thus brought well under the *Java's* lee bow, and it was now the *Java's* turn to take a raking. She got it with frightful effect, for she came end on until her jib-boom fouled the mizzen rigging of the *Constitution*. The Yankee topmen poured their fire into the gathering boarders on the *Java*. The Yankee gunners hurled round-shot, grape and canister that raked the *Java* from

The Battle Between the *Constitution* and the *Java*.—I.
(At five minutes past three o'clock as the *Java's* foremast fell.)
From an engraving by Havel, after a sketch by Lieutenant Buchanan.

stem to stern. The sails of the *Constitution* were backed to hold her where she could continue the fire. The *Java's* bowsprit was shot away. It was the first of her spars to go and it dropped under her bows at 3 o'clock precisely. Five minutes later her foremast was chopped off by the Yankee round-shot, and it fell over the lee bow. The *Constitution* forereached off the *Java's* bows, wore around, gave her broadsides from the fresh battery thus brought into play, came back to give her a further broadside, and, as the enemy swung around head on because of the drag of the wrecked foremast, the *Constitution* wore again and gave her the port broadside. The *Java's* main topmast came crashing down from aloft. The gaff and boom of the spanker followed, and last of all, at five minutes before four o'clock her mizzen-mast was cut down as the foremast had been, carrying her last flag with it.

A hearty Yankee "hurrah" rose from the deck of the *Constitution*. At the sound of it John Cheever, a sturdy Marblehead seaman, who was lying on deck apparently dead from a wound he had received, opened his eyes and, calling to a shipmate, asked what the noise was for, and in reply learned that the enemy had struck. Springing up on one hand he waved the other above his head and gave three cheers.

But the last one ended with the death-rattle in his throat and he fell back dead.

In just sixty-five minutes from the time that Commodore Bainbridge decided to risk the *Java's* raking fire he had her rolling on the long seas a complete wreck.

And yet the pluck of the British crew was so great that their fire was not wholly silenced until ten minutes later, a fact of which any Anglo-Saxon, whatever his flag, may well feel proud.

Seeing that the enemy was silenced, and his flag nowhere in sight, the *Constitution* stood up to windward with every spar aloft in place, "ship-shape and Bristol fashion." She had received one shot through the mizzen-mast, and some other spars had been clipped and grazed by the *Java's* fire; some of her running rigging and of her shrouds and stays had been slashed, but for practical purposes she was "fore and fit." As the British *Naval Chronicle* put it, "the *Java* sustained unequalled injuries beyond the *Constitution*."

Nevertheless, on returning to the *Java* the British flag was found waving from the stump mizzen-mast, and the *Constitution* ranged up to give her another raking broadside. As the *Java* was then entirely helpless the British flag was hauled down.

It was not until an actual inspection of the wreck had been made that the real state of af-

The Battle Between the *Constitution* and the *Java*.—II.
(At half-past four o'clock, as the *Constitution* began to make sail.)
From an engraving by Havel, after a sketch by Lieutenant Buchanan.

fairs on the *Java* could be realized by those on the *Constitution*. As Lieutenant Parker from the *Constitution* climbed on board he saw her decks strewn with the dead and wounded, while the living were busy with the grewsome task of dropping the dead over the rail. Captain Lambert, "her able and gallant commander," had been mortally wounded soon after three o'clock. The command had then devolved on Lieutenant Chads, and to him was due the credit of the obstinate struggle after the foremast fell. And he did it, too, in spite of the fact that he was severely wounded. Like the fierce Lieutenant David Hope of the *Macedonian*, he was anxious to fight even after his ship was reduced to a helpless hulk. He had striven with desperate energy to refit his ship with a jury-rig while the *Constitution* was making repairs to her running rigging—had spread a sail to a part of the main-yard that was left in place and was working on a jury foremast when the *Constitution* returned. But labor was vain. The cool precision of the Yankee gunners had literally cut the ship to pieces. Her masts were down and her hull was a sieve.

The conventional comparison of the forces and losses of the two ships cannot be made in any way better than by quoting Roosevelt's "The Naval War of 1812." He says:

"Her loss (the *Constitution's*) amounted to

8 seamen and 1 marine killed; the fifth lieutenant, John C. Alwyn, and 2 seamen, mortally; Commodore Bainbridge and 12 seamen, severely, and 7 seamen and 2 marines, slightly wounded; in all 12 killed and mortally wounded, and 22 wounded severely and slightly. . . . In this action both crews displayed equal gallantry and seamanship. . . . The manœuvering on both sides was excellent. Captain Lambert used the advantage which his ship possessed in her superior speed most skilfully, always endeavoring to run across his adversary's bows and rake him when he had forereached, and it was only owing to the equal skill which his antagonist displayed that he was foiled, the length of the combat being due to the number of evolutions. The great superiority of the Americans was in their gunnery. The fire of the *Java* was both less rapid and less well directed than that of her antagonist; the difference of force against her was not heavy, being about as ten to nine, and was by no means enough to account for the almost fivefold greater loss she suffered. . . . The comparative force and loss: the *Constitution* measured 1,576 tons, threw 654 pounds of metal, carried 475 men, and lost 34. The *Java* measured 1,340 tons, threw 576 pounds of metal, carried 426 men, and lost 150.

"In hardly another action of the war do

the accounts of the respective forces differ so widely; the official British letter makes their total of men at the beginning of the action 377, of whom Commodore Bainbridge officially reports that he paroled 378! The British state their loss in killed and mortally wounded at 24; Commodore Bainbridge reports that the dead alone amounted to nearly sixty! Usually I

The *Java* Surrendering to the *Constitution*.
From an old wood-cut.

have taken each commander's account of his own force and loss, and I should do so now if it were not that the British accounts differ among themselves, and wherever they relate to the Americans are flatly contradicted by the affidavits of the latter's officers. The British first handicap themselves by the statement that the surgeon of the *Constitution* was an Irishman and lately an assistant surgeon in the British Navy ("Naval Chronicle," xxix, 452);

which draws from Surgeon Amos A. Evans a solemn statement in the *Boston Gazette* that he was born in Maryland and was never in the British Navy in his life. Then Surgeon Jones, of the *Java*, in his official report, after giving his own killed and mortally wounded at twenty-four, says that the Americans lost in all about sixty, and that four of their amputations perished under his own eyes; whereupon Surgeon Evans makes the statement ("Niles's Register," vi., p. 35), backed up by affidavits of his brother officers, that in all he had but five amputations, of whom only one died, and that one a month after Surgeon Jones had left the ship. To meet the assertions of Lieutenant Chads that he began the action with but 377 men, the *Constitution's* officers produced the *Java's* muster-roll, dated November 17th, or five days after she had sailed, which showed 446 persons, of whom 20 had been put on board a prize. The presence of this large number of supernumeraries on board is explained by the fact that the *Java* was carrying out Lieutenant-General Hislop, the newly appointed Governor of Bombay, and his suite, together with part of the crews of the *Cornwallis* 74, and gun sloops *Chameleon* and *Icarus*. she also contained stores for those two ships.

"Besides conflicting with the American reports, the British statements contradict one an-

other. The official published report gives but two midshipmen as killed, while one of the volumes of the "Naval Chronicle" (vol. xxix., p. 452), contains a letter from one of the *Java's* lieutenants, in which he states that there were five. Finally, Commodore Bainbridge found on board the *Constitution*, after the prisoners had left, a letter from Lieutenant H. D. Cornick, dated January 1, 1813, and addressed to Lieutenant Peter V. Wood, Twenty-second Regiment, foot, in which he states that sixty-five of their men were killed. James ("Naval Occurrences") gets around this by stating that it was probably a forgery; but, aside from the improbability of Commodore Bainbridge being a forger, this could not be so, for nothing would have been easier than for the British lieutenant to have denied having written it, which he never did.

"Taking all these facts into consideration, we find 446 men on board the *Java* by her own muster-list; 378 of these were paroled by Commodore Bainbridge at San Salvador; 24 men were acknowledged by the enemy to be killed or mortally wounded; 20 were absent in a prize, leaving 24 unaccounted for, who were undoubtedly slain.

"The British loss was thus 48 men killed and mortally wounded, and 102 wounded severely and slightly."

Maclay, who was entirely familiar with Roose-

velt's account, gives good reasons for believing that Bainbridge's estimate of the enemy's loss was accurate—60 killed and 101 wounded.

In a footnote, Mr. Roosevelt refers to Lord Dundonald's "Autobiography of a Seaman" for "an account of the shameless corruption then existing in the Naval Administration of Great Britain." Losses, according to this British writer, were often "much greater than were ever acknowledged." Brenton, the British naval historian, also tells how the letters of the commanders were garbled.

The charge that an American commodore committed forgery is but a mild exhibit of the British temper of the early part of the century.

To complete the story of the *Constitution* and *Java* fight, it must be told that all but two of the small boats in the two ships had been destroyed—one on each ship remained. Little account is made in the histories of the work of removing the wounded in these two small boats from the *Java* to the *Constitution*, and this is very likely the proper way to treat the matter. There is enough sorrow in the world at all times without recalling the sorrows long past. But one story of the brave wounded must not be omitted. Among them was Edward Keele, a British midshipman, mortally hurt. He was but thirteen years old, and the

Java was his first ship. "He had suffered amputation of a leg, and after the action was over inquired anxiously if the ship had struck. Seeing one of the flags spread over him, he became very uneasy, but being assured that *it was English*, he was satisfied;" and so he died.

Among the mortally hurt on the *Constitution* was Lieutenant John C. Alwyn, already mentioned. He had been wounded in the shoulder in the *Constitution's* fight with the *Guerrière*, and had not fully recovered, although able to attend to his duties. As the *Java* bore down to board the *Constitution*, Alwyn led the men who were called aft on the *Constitution*, and the moment the *Java's* jib-boom struck the *Constitution's* mizzen-rigging he jumped up on the *Constitution's* quarter-deck hammock-netting to repel the enemy. Drawing a pistol, he aimed it at the crowd on the enemy's forecastle, when a musket ball pierced the same shoulder that had been hurt in the other fight. The shock knocked him back to the deck. Seeing him fall, a marine in the *Constitution's* mizzen-top glanced over the crew of the *Java* until he distinguished an officer. His eyes fell upon Captain Lambert, and, raising his musket, he shot the captain through the left breast.

Then the ships drifted apart, but Alwyn refused to leave the deck, and continued at his post as his captain was doing. A few days

later, when a strange sail, plainly a man-o'-war, was seen and the ship was cleared for action, Alwyn left his bed and took his post. The ship proved to be the *Constitution's* consort, the *Hornet*, but the exertion which Alwyn made at this time brought on an inflammation that ended his life.

Captain Lambert was one of the last wounded brought from the *Java*. He was delirious at the time, but eventually recovered consciousness. On learning this, Commodore Bainbridge took the sword of the dying captain in hand, and, supported by two officers (for he was now unable to walk alone), he hobbled to Lambert's bedside, and placing the weapon in that officer's hand, told of his pleasure in returning the sword of one who had so bravely and efficiently defended his ship.

A curious story of the transfer of the unhurt is also worth repeating, even though it borders on the realm of superstitions. It is a matter of record that a few nights before the battle Commodore Bainbridge "dreamed that he had a long encounter with a British vessel and finally captured her. On board were several officers, and among them a general. It made such an impression on him that he entered the facts in his journal, and spoke of them to his officers. After the engagement, as he was standing on deck, surrounded by his officers, waiting to

receive the commander of the *Java*, he saw the boat carrying General Hislop approach. Turning to Lieutenant Parker, he said:

"That is the man I saw in my dream!"

Having transferred all the living from the *Java* to the *Constitution*, a survey of the *Java's* hulk was made. The conclusion was that, considering the great distance from the United States (a sailing passage from Bahia to New York will commonly average sixty days), and the serious injuries the *Java* had received, it was useless to think of carrying her home. So she was set on fire on the 31st day of December, 1812, and when, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, the fire reached her magazine, she was blown to pieces, leaving only her splintered spars and deck to drift with the scud of the waves to the evergreen shore.

A Yankee ballad maker celebrated the victory with a song that was for a long time popular. The following is a stanza:

Come, lads, draw near, and you shall hear
In truth as chaste as Dian, O!
How Bainbridge true, and his bold crew,
Again have tamed the lion, O!
'Twas off Brazil, he got the pill,
Which made him cry *peccavi*, O!
But hours two, the *Java* new,
Maintained the battle bravely, O!

[SPOKEN.]

But our gallant tars, as soon as they were piped to quarters, gave three cheers, and boldly swore,

by the blood of the heroes of Tripoli, that, sooner than strike, they'd go to the bottom, singing :

[SUNG.]

Tid re I, Tid re I, Tid re id re I do.

The Congress of the United States had on June 18, 1812, enacted "That war be, and the same is hereby declared to exist between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories." The incapable administration of President Madison had decided to make the war on land and keep the few ships of the navy in port. The indomitable officers of the navy, led by Bainbridge, had modified this determination, but only after long argument, so that the ships were permitted to go out to battle. Hull, magnificent in his courage, had even sailed without orders, even while orders to keep him in port were on the way. And the result of it all was this :

In six months those few long-derided Yankee frigates had done more than all the navies of Europe combined together had been able to do in twenty years. They had, in single-ship actions, captured five English men-o'-war, destroying at least three of them beyond repair, inflicting losses that varied from one-third to four-fifths of the beaten crews, and the longest action, from the first to the last gun, was less

than two hours. A tremendous loss—a loss such as no English ships had inflicted on an enemy in any single-ship battle, and the extreme brevity of each contest, were the astounding features of these actions. Not in all the twenty years of steady sea-fighting between the years of 1792 and 1812 had the British navy suffered five such defeats as those inflicted upon

Medal Awarded to William Bainbridge after the Capture of the *Java* by the *Constitution.*

her by the Yankees during the six months that ended when the mountainous bluffs of Brazil echoed to the explosion of the beaten *Java.*

After disposing of the hulk of the *Java*, Commodore Bainbridge landed his prisoners, as told, on parole at San Salvador (now called Bahia). He had sailed for the East Indies, but having failed to find the *Essex*, and having found that the *Constitution* was suffering from decay in some parts as well as from the serious injury to

her mizzen-mast, he decided to return home. He sailed from Bahia on January 6, 1813 and reached Boston on February 27th. Scarce need it be said that the people were wildly enthusiastic once more in their rejoicing. There were processions and banquets. The Congress voted a gold medal to Bainbridge and silver medals to his lieutenants, and $50,000 to the crew.

The news of the defeat reached England on March 19, 1813. The London *Times* of the next day said regarding the victory of the Americans:

"This is an occurrence that calls for serious reflection—this and the fact stated in our paper of yesterday, that Lloyd's List contains notices of upward of five hundred British vessels captured in seven months by the Americans. Five hundred merchantmen and three frigates! Can these statements be true? And can the English people hear them unmoved? Any one who would have predicted such a result of an American war this time last year would have been treated as a madman or a traitor. He would have been told, if his opponents had condescended to argue with him, that long ere seven months had elapsed the American flag would have been swept from the seas, the contemptible navy of the United States annihilated, and their marine arsenals rendered a heap of ruins.

Yet down to this moment not a single American frigate has struck her flag."

It is worth telling, to illustrate the character of Bainbridge, that, in 1796, he was returning from Europe in the merchant-ship *Hope*, of which he was the captain. One day the *Hope* was overhauled and boarded by a British warship, and the boarding officers compelled a muster of the crew. The mate's name was McKinsey. He was an American, of course, but the lieutenant at once decided that he was a Scotchman. However, at the suggestion of Bainbridge, McKinsey entered a state-room, and with pistols successfully defied the lieutenant, who then carried off a common sailor. As the lieutenant left, Bainbridge declared that a man should be taken from the first British merchantman met, to replace the one taken. The lieutenant said Bainbridge would not dare to do so. Five days later the *Hope* fell in with a British brig, that had a larger crew and eight guns to the *Hope's* four, and Bainbridge at once carried out his threat, in spite of a stout resistance. He was one of the greatest of American naval heroes.

CHAPTER IX

WHIPPED IN FOURTEEN MINUTES

THE REMARKABLE BATTLE BETWEEN THE YANKEE *HORNET* AND THE BRITISH *PEACOCK*—THE BRITISH SHIP WAS SO PRETTY SHE WAS KNOWN AS "THE YACHT," BUT HER GUNNERS COULD NOT HIT THE BROADSIDE OF THE *HORNET* WHEN THE SHIPS WERE IN CONTACT—AS HER FLAG CAME DOWN A SIGNAL OF DISTRESS WENT UP, FOR SHE WAS SINKING—THE EFFORTS OF TWO CREWS COULD NOT SAVE HER—"A VESSEL MOORED FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPERIMENT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN SUNK SOONER"—INFAMOUS TREATMENT OF AMERICAN SEAMEN REPAID BY THE GOLDEN RULE—CAPTAIN GREEN, OF THE *BONNE CITOYENNE*, DID NOT DARE MEET THE *HORNET*.

THE battle between the *Constitution's* consort *Hornet* and the British brig *Peacock* was the sixth of the war and a most remarkable illustration not only of the skill of the Yankee gunners but of their willing—their eager energy when fighting against the slave-drivers of the sea. It was fought off the mouth of the Demerara River, South America, on February 24, 1813.

The *Hornet* was what was called a sloop of war. She had been originally rigged as a brig and was sent to the Mediterranean in that fash-

ion, but after the trouble with the African pirates was ended she returned home and together with the *Wasp* was changed into a three-masted instead of two-masted rig. She was armed with eighteen short thirty-twos and two long twelves.

Under the command of Master Commandant James Lawrence, she sailed from Boston, as already told, in company with the *Constitution*, bound on a cruise against British commerce in the East Indies, and the two came down to the coast of Brazil, where the *Essex* was expected to join them. On reaching Bahia (San Salvador) the British war-ship *Bonne Citoyenne*, Captain P. B. Greene, was found at anchor in the harbor. The *Bonne Citoyenne* was a ship of the same size as the *Hornet* and she carried exactly the same number of guns, her broadside guns being short thirty-twos, and her long guns nines. That is to say, if the *Hornet's* shot were allowed to be of full weight (which to our disgrace they were not) the *Hornet* could throw just three pounds of metal more than the *Bonne Citoyenne* at a broadside. It is perhaps worth noting that the *Bonne Citoyenne* had fought for seven hours and captured "a French frigate of the largest class" in 1809.

Finding her a fair match for the *Hornet*, Captain Lawrence sent her a challenge to go outside and have a fight. Such challenges were common and popular in those days. Both Law-

rence and Commodore Hull gave their word of honor that the *Constitution* would not interfere, but Captain Greene declined.

It eventually became apparent that he was really a coward, for the *Constitution*, after destroying the *Java*, sailed from Bahia for home on January 6, 1813, leaving the *Hornet* blockading the *Bonne Citoyenne*. And the *Hornet*

The *Hornet* Blockading the *Bonne Citoyenne*.
From an old wood-cut.

maintained the blockade until the 24th, when a British seventy-four, the *Montagu*, arrived and the *Hornet* had to fly.

One gets a curious illustration of the character of one British historian in James's account of this matter. He who constantly called the Americans cowards denies that the *Hornet* blockaded the *Bonne Citoyenne* single-handed, and yet tells, on page 277, that the *Constitution* sailed for home on January 6, leaving the

Hornet to cruise alone off the harbor for nearly three weeks.

Meantime, on the day of the *Constitution-Java* fight, the American ship *William*, that the *Java* had taken, tried to make port at Bahia, and fell into the hands of Captain Lawrence, who took out her prize crew and sent her on her way under her own.

However, having been driven off at last by a line-of-battle ship sent from Rio Janeiro for the express purpose of raising the blockade, the *Hornet* cruised to the north along the coast of South America, and having rounded Cape St. Roque, continued to keep along shore. Several prizes were made, one being a brig called the *Resolution* with $23,000 coin on board, but no incident of greater note occurred until off the mouth of Demerara River.

Here on February 24th a British war-brig called the *Espiègle*, Captain John Taylor, was seen at anchor in the mouth of the river. As that was British territory there was every incentive to attack her, and as she carried eighteen thirty-twos she was a fair match. Captain Lawrence therefore went hunting her, but while following the channel around Caroband Bank he "at half past three P. M. discovered another sail on our weather-quarter edging down for us. At twenty minutes past four she hoisted English colors, at which we dis-

covered her to be a large man-of-war brig—beat to quarters, cleared ship for action, and kept close by the wind in order, if possible, to get the weather-gauge." So runs the report of Captain Lawrence.

The enemy was the British man-of-war brig *Peacock*, Captain William Peake.

When the British brig was discovered the *Hornet* was in less than twenty-four feet of water, and although she stood off shore somewhat to weather the enemy, the contest that followed was over good anchorage ground from beginning to end. From 4.20 P.M. until 5.10 the two vessels jockeyed for position, as yachtsmen would say, and then, seeing he had won the position, Captain Lawrence brought the *Hornet* around from the port to the starboard tack and headed across the bows of the enemy, who was still on the port tack. As the sails filled he flung the American ensign to the breeze.

Silently but swiftly the two ships approached each other, sailing almost in opposite directions for fifteen anxious minutes, and then at 5.25 o'clock "within half pistol shot," both ships opened fire, not with all their guns in one thunderous discharge, but gun after gun in swift succession, as each one could be brought to bear—gun after gun until ten on each had boomed.

From the Englishman ten shots flew high over the *Hornet's* deck. One of them killed a man in the mizzentop and another slightly wounded two men in the maintop. From the Yankee ten round shot were driven straight into the *Peacock's* hull.

In a moment the two ships had passed each other. The *Peacock* at once wore around before the wind to come to it on the other tack, while the *Hornet* squared away across the *Peacock's* stern, and in a jiffy the Yankee's bow was against the enemy's quarter and the Yankee gunners were shooting her literally full of holes. At this moment Captain Peake of the *Peacock* was killed. The Yankee gunners worked so swiftly that the guns got heated and some of the men dipped up the water of the sea in buckets to pour on the guns to keep them cool. The enemy were unable to face the murderous blast and hauled down the flag at 5.39 o'clock. The action had lasted from the first gun-fire until the flag came down but fourteen minutes.

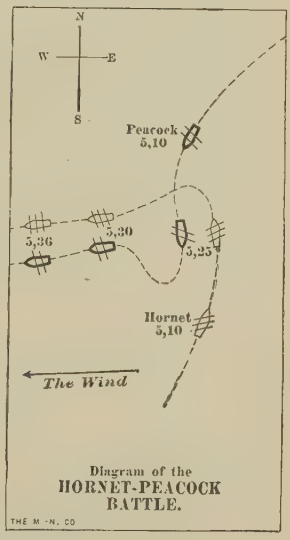


Diagram of the
HORNET-PEACOCK
BATTLE.

Captain Lawrence's report said fifteen minutes. In explanation of the difference Lawrence said his clerk got it down as fifteen by mistake, and the time was so short at most that it was not worth while making an alteration in the log. "I thought that was short enough," said Lawrence.

Immediately after hauling down their flag the *Peacock's* mainmast fell, and the enemy hoisted signals of distress. The crew of the *Hornet*, under Lieutenant J. T. Shubrick, made haste to get out all their boats and board the *Peacock*. Both ships came to anchor and the Yankees found the water pouring through the big holes the shot of the *Hornet* had made in the *Peacock*. The crew were unable to save her. For a few minutes everybody labored to plug the holes and work the pumps and even at bailing with buckets. But the ship was mortally wounded—the inflowing water was drowning her—and the men abandoned the pumps to save the wounded. Four Englishmen jumped into a boat at the stern and sneaked ashore in the night that was fast coming down. The wounded were all saved, but within a brief time the water rose to the port sills, flowed gently in across the deck and down she sank in the smooth sea. "A vessel moored for the purpose of experiment could not have been sunk sooner."

John T. Shubrick.

From an engraving by Gimbrede.

As she sank, four of the men on deck scampered up the fore-rigging. The big launch lying on the booms amidships was lifted clear by the rising water, and into this scrambled the rest of the men on deck. The ship was sinking so easily that there was no vortex to draw them down. She found bottom in thirty-three feet of water, and the men in the fore-rigging were saved. But three Americans and nine Englishmen who were below were lost.

After taking the men from the rigging the launch was paddled over to the *Hornet*, and it was learned then, that three of the *Peacock's* crew were impressed Americans, one of them being a relative of the wife of Captain Lawrence.

One of these men was Richard Thompson, of New Paltz, Ulster County, New York. He

The *Hornet* Sinking the *Peacock*.

From an old wood-cut.

testified under oath that he was taken from an American merchant-ship in 1810 by the *Peacock's* press-gang. Thereafter he was not allowed to write to his friends. When he and his two American shipmates heard of the War of 1812, they asked Captain Peake to treat them as prisoners of war. For this they were put in irons for twenty-four hours, then taken on deck, stripped naked, "tied and whipped, each one dozen and a half lashes, and put to duty." As

the action with the *Hornet* came on they again asked to be excused from fighting against their flag, but Captain Peake drove them back to the guns, and ordered the marines to keep an especial watch on them, and shoot them at the first sign of flinching. And so one was killed by the fire of his countrymen.

Hitherto nothing has been said of the treatment which British prisoners, taken in this war, received at the hands of the Americans. It was, and is not necessary, for an American to speak of the humanity of his countrymen when dealing with prisoners of war. But because of the infamous treatment which the three Americans had received on the *Peacock*, it must be told that the crew of the *Hornet*, out of their own money, provided every sailor from the *Peacock* with two shirts, a blue jacket and a pair of trousers. They did this because the *Peacock* had gone down so suddenly the men could not save their clothes. Further than this, the five surviving officers on reaching New York wrote a letter dated March 27, 1813, to Lawrence, and had it published in the papers in which they said:

"We, the surviving officers of his Britannic Majesty's brig *Peacock*, beg leave to return you our grateful acknowledgments for the kind attention and hospitality we experienced during the time we remained on board the United

States sloop *Hornet.* So much was done to alleviate the distressing and uncomfortable situation in which we were placed when received on board the sloop you command, that we cannot better express our feelings, than by saying, we ceased to consider ourselves prisoners, and everything that friendship could dictate was adopted by you and the officers of the *Hornet*, to remedy the inconveniences we should otherwise have experienced from the unavoidable loss of the whole of our property and clothes."

And while this subject is in hand it may be worth while to make one more quotation from England's naval historian, James. In volume vi. page 136, he says: "The manner in which the *Java's* men were treated by the American *officers* reflects upon the latter the highest disgrace; the moment the prisoners were brought on board they were handcuffed. Admitting that to have been justifiable as a measure of precaution, what right had the poor fellows to be pillaged of almost everything they possessed." And this was written although James had seen and read the letters of General Hyslop testifying to the extreme pains taken by Commodore Bainbridge to see that no private property was taken by any of the victors from the vanquished—indeed, that silver plate that was lawful prize was left to its original owners.

The number of killed on the *Hornet* by the

enemy was one man, and but two were wounded. However, two men were hurt by the accidental explosion of a cartridge of whom one died. The *Peacock* lost eight killed and thirty wounded—that is to say as a result of the Yankee's fire the British lost thirteen times as many as the Yankees lost from theirs. The most significant fact of this battle was this, that but one of the British shot struck the *Hornet's* hull, and that one glanced off the bow, merely indenting the plank, while the *Peacock* was, as told, shot under the water in fourteen minutes. The English historians lay stress on the fact that the *Hornet* had thirty-twos to the *Peacock's* twenty-fours, just as they laid stress on the twenty-fours of the *United States* and the *Constitution* as against the eighteens carried by the British frigates they whipped. But the candid student of history will observe that the *Hornet's* hull was scratched only by a single shot. The *United States* received but three shot in her hull during the fight with the *Macedonian.* The hull of the *Constitution* was scarcely touched in the fight with the *Guerrière*, and so runs the whole record. Suppose the *Peacock* had had sixty-four pounders instead of twenty-fours. Of what avail would they have been when her gunners could not hit the broadside of a ship "within half pistol-shot" range?

The conventional comparison of the ships shows that the *Hornet* measured 480 tons, carried ten guns, throwing 270 pounds of metal in a broadside, and had a crew of 135, of whom three were killed and wounded. The *Peacock* measured 477 tons, carried ten guns, throwing 210 pounds of metal at a broadside, and was worked by 122 men, of whom thirty-eight were killed and wounded.

Captain Peake was exceedingly proud of his ship. James says that "the *Peacock* had long been the admiration of her numerous visitors for the tasteful arrangement of her deck, and had obtained in consequence the name of 'the yacht.' The breechings of the carronades were covered with white canvas . . . and nothing could exceed in brilliancy the polish upon the traversing bars and elevating screws."

In polish the *Hornet* was not to be compared with her.

Having sunk the *Peacock*, and cared for her crew, Captain Lawrence set to work to fit his ship for another fight. The *Espiègle* was in plain view during the action, being but six miles away, and it was natural to look for her. By 9 o'clock the *Hornet* was ready for her, but she did not come. The *Hornet's* crew had for some time been on a short allowance of water. With the prisoners from the *Pea-*

cock (112), the prize crew of the American ship *Hunter* which the *Peacock* had captured (11), the crew of the British brig *Resolution* (16), and the *Hornet's* own crew (138 including eight sick in bed), there were 277 men on the *Hornet.* These figures are worth quoting for the reason that the British historians, including

Medal Awarded to James Lawrence, after the Capture of the *Peacock* by the *Hornet.*

Allen (revised edition printed in 1890) say that the *Hornet* had a crew of 163.

On the morning of February 25, 1813, Captain Lawrence put all hands on a half-ration of water and squared away for home. He reached Martha's Vineyard on March 19th, and sailed thence to New York, through the Sound. He was received with the enthusiasm that had been accorded to Hull, Decatur, and Bainbridge, and later a gold medal was voted

by the Congress to his nearest male relative, and silver medals to the officers who had fought under him. Meantime, he was promoted to the command of the *Chesapeake*, a most unfortunate promotion, for it cost him his life.

CHAPTER X

LOSS OF LAWRENCE AND THE *CHESAPEAKE*

THE YANKEES HAD WON SO OFTEN THAT THEY WERE UNDERESTIMATING THE ENEMY AND WERE OVERCONFIDENT IN THEMSELVES—A MIXED CREW, NEWLY SHIPPED, UNTRAINED AND MUTINOUS, TEN PER CENT OF THEM BEING BRITISH—THE RESULT WAS NATURAL AND INEVITABLE—CHIVALRY A PLENTY; COMMON-SENSE WANTING—THE "SHANNONS" WERE TRAINED LIKE YANKEES—A FIERCE CONFLICT—SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JOY OF THE BRITISH OVER THE *SHANNON'S* VICTORY.

Now coil up your nonsense 'bout England's great Navy,
And take in your slack about oak-hearted Tars,
For frigates as stout, and as gallant crews have we,
Or how came her *Macedon* decked with our Stars?
Yes—how came her *Guerrière*, her *Peacock* and *Java*,
All sent broken-ribb'd to Old Davy of late?
How came it? Why, split me! than Britons we're braver,
And that they shall feel too whenever we meet.

So sang the Yankee ballad-maker when filled with the haughty spirit that precedes a fall. Surely, if ever a young nation had reason for exultation and even for vainglorious songs young America had. During eight months her tiny navy had not only maintained itself upon the high seas where the enemy out-numbered it a hundred to one, but, as said,

it had won more victories in that time than all Europe had been able to do in twenty years. Not only had the Americans showed the sturdy and persistent courage of the ancestral stock; they had shown the ingenuity of invention, the power of adaptation under unusual circumstances, and the general progressiveness which the spirit of that stock always develops when freed from Tory—that is to say, unreasonably conservative—restraints. To the natural aptness for the sea which they had in common with their cousins over the water, they had added such characteristics as naturally grow out of self-government.

Unfortunately, however, along with much good from the ancestral stock, they had also inherited not a little of the tendency to arrogant self-esteem. As the unbroken series of victories over European navies had made the British sailors feel themselves invincible, so the practically unbroken, if short, series of victories of the Americans over the British tars in the early months of the War of 1812, brought them to a state of mind where they trusted in something else than the unwearied vigilance and training that had made the crews of Hull, Decatur, Bainbridge, Jones, and Lawrence, the wonder—literally the wonder—of the whole world. Thereafter, defeat impended whenever an American ship might fall in with

James Lawrence.

From an engraving by Edwin of the portrait of Stuart.

a British ship whose commander had not fallen into the prevailing slovenly habits of his navy.

As it happened, Lawrence, who had been the last to earn the applause of his countrymen, was to be the victim of the growing vanity of his navy. In the frigate *Chesapeake* he sailed out of Boston to meet the *Shannon.* As the people of Carrickfergus in the north of Ireland went out on an excursion fleet to see Captain Burden of the British ship *Drake* thrash the life out of John Paul Jones in the American ship *Ranger,* so the people of Boston flocked to the sea in all sorts of craft and climbed to heights overlooking the water that they might see Lawrence bring in the bold Captain Broke, who was cruising to and fro, anxious for a combat. That they returned humiliated was due to the fact that Lawrence went into the battle in the spirit of Dacres and Carden, while Broke went into it in the spirit of Hull and Decatur.

When Lawrence returned from the cruise on the coast of South America he applied to the Secretary of the Navy for the command of the *Constitution.* After some correspondence his request was granted, and then the order was recalled, and he was sent, very much against his will, to the *Chesapeake.* His dislike for the *Chesapeake* will be very well understood by any sailor when it is recalled that she was

the unlucky ship of the navy. She had sailed from Boston under Captain Evans, on December 13, 1812, and had arrived back on April 9, 1813. She had captured five merchantmen, and had escaped when chased by a British seventy-four and a frigate, but that was all she had done. On reaching port there was trouble in her crew over the payment of the prize money, and most of them left her, the two years for which they had shipped being ended. Evans left her because of trouble with his eyes. It would have been better for her new commander if more of the crew had left, for of those who stayed not a few were foreigners, and these were under the influence of a Portuguese boatswain's mate. That a Portuguese, of all nationalities, should have been trusted even with a petty office shows to an American sailor the character of the crew whom Lawrence found on board. Among other foreigners, too, were thirty-two of English birth.

The exact day when Lawrence arrived is not recorded, but he did not leave the *Hornet* in New York until after May 10th, and that was in the time of stage coaches. It was at about the middle of May that he took command. A still further indication of the condition of affairs on board is found in the fact that Acting-Lieutenant Pierce was allowed to leave the ship, as Lawrence explained it, because of

"his being at variance with every officer in his mess."

With a ship that, figuratively speaking, carried the flag of the "Flying Dutchman," and with the nucleus of a crew in a mutinous state of mind over a failure to get the prize money to which they believed themselves entitled, Lawrence began fitting out for sea. The wages in the navy then were fair, and the glory of the flag undimmed, but getting sailors for the *Chesapeake* was the hardest work of the life of her commander. Nor was it merely that she was an unlucky ship. It must not be forgotten that hosts of American seafaring men were then by force serving in the British navy, while more than two thousand of them were then in Dartmoor prison in England, whither they had been sent by such of the English captains as were humane enough not to compel an American to fight against his flag. Of the few American seamen who remained to man American ships not many were found to ship on a man-o'-war. The privateers, of whom some stirring tales remain to be told, had picked them off the streets. The crew which Captain Lawrence obtained was precisely such a crew as a ship fresh from an English port in those days would have had naturally—a crew that was swept up from the streets as a whole, and yet contained a considerable number of ex-

perienced, capable men. It was what a football expert would call a scrub team. It was a crew that in six weeks might have been trained by Lawrence to fight as one man, but Lawrence never had the opportunity to train it.

The *Chesapeake* was fitting for a voyage to the east, where she could intercept British ships bound for the St. Lawrence, and thence to the Greenland whale fishery. The *Hornet*, under Master Commandant James Biddle, was to meet the *Chesapeake* at Cape Canso.

Meantime a British ship-of-the-line, and the frigate *Shannon*, Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke (the ship that had chased the *Constitution* for three days), had been blockading the port of Boston, but Broke, who was looking for laurels in a single-ship fight with an American frigate, sent the ship-of-the-line away, and alone maintained the blockade.

Meantime it should be told that Broke was showing himself one of the ablest captains in the British navy. He may have hated the Yankees but he did not despise them so much that he would not imitate them. He had for seven years commanded the *Shannon*, and in that time, and especially since war was declared by the United States, he had worked with his crew as a Hull, or a Decatur, or a Lawrence would have done. He called them his "Shannons." He made them proud of their ship. He

Sir Philip Bowes Vere Broke, Bart.

From a lithograph of the portrait by Lane.

fitted sights to his guns and he offered prizes to successful marksmen. He tumbled empty casks into the sea, and then sailed around them while his gunners fired at them. He trained his marines and other topmen in the use of muskets until they could see through the sights before pulling the trigger. He was as proud of them as they were of him and of the ship, and the pride was justified on both sides.

Eventually opportunity offered, and he wrote a challenge to the *Chesapeake* to come out and fight—"ship to ship, to try the fortunes of our respective flags." Unfortunately this letter was a long time in reaching Boston, and Lawrence never saw it. Had he received it he would have set a date that would have given him sufficient time to get his crew in hand. As it was, the report that a single British frigate was cruising to and fro off Boston light, plainly waiting for the *Chesapeake*, came to town and stirred the whole community into a patriotic glow.

What was Lawrence to do under the circumstances? He had himself in the *Hornet* cruised off Bahia, daring the nerveless Captain Greene of the *Bonne Citoyenne* to come out "ship to ship, to try the fortunes of our respective flags." He had met the British *Peacock* and shot her gorgeous feathers out of sight. He had earned a glorious reputation for bravery and skill. He

had come to think lightly of the skill, though not lightly of the valor of the enemy. There was but one thing that a man like him could do. He rejoiced at the chance to meet the enemy once more single-handed. Bainbridge and others advised him to wait until he had trained his crew, but he was unable to endure the thought of having the British deride him as he had derided Greene of the *Bonne Citoyenne.*

Barely waiting to complete the number of his crew, he spread his sails—indeed the last draft of men came on board and went directly to sheets, halyards, and the capstan, without stowing away their clothes and hammocks. The men did not know the officers even by sight. They did not know each other. They did not know their places at either the ropes or their guns. The *Chesapeake* was going to sea in so nearly the same condition as that in which she met the *Leopard*, that the unprejudiced student must see the resemblance. It was the folly of pride to go to meet any frigate in such fashion.

It was on the morning of June 1, 1813, that the *Chesapeake* sailed. A Nova Scotia negro, it is said, stood on the long wharf as the last boatload of the *Chesapeake's* crew put off to board her, and called out to a friend:

"Good-by, Sam. You is gwine to Halifax

befo' you comes back to Bosting. Gib my lub to 'quirin' friends, an' tell 'em I's very well."

He was a wise prophet but a foolish darky. He told the truth and narrowly escaped death at the hands of a mob for doing so.

With such speed as was possible, Captain Lawrence spread his sails to the breeze, spread everything from courses to royals and studding sails, and drove away beyond the light. On his way out he hoisted a great burgee containing the words "Free trade and sailors' rights." As the reader will remember, "free trade" there had no reference to tariffs or imports—the phrase meant that the Americans were fighting for the right to trade on the high seas unmolested by British press-gangs and Orders-in-Council. Then the crew were called into the gangway, where Captain Lawrence began to talk to them to infuse some of his own spirit into their breasts. But hardly had he begun when he was interrupted by loud murmurs from the men who had been on the previous cruise of the *Chesapeake.* Led by the "scoundrel Portuguese, who was boatswain's mate," they *demanded* their prize-money

James Lawrence

From an engraving by Edwin.

under penalty of refusing to do duty. Not only was the crew raw and untrained; it was to an astounding extent mutinous.

What ought to have been done at this moment—what a modern naval officer would have done—may be a matter worth considering, but Lawrence yielded to the mutineers by calling them into the cabin and giving them checks for the prize-money due. Then they went forward and First Lieutenant Augustus C. Ludlow, assisted by Second Lieutenant George Budd (an officer of some experience) and Midshipmen William Cox and Edward J. Ballard, acting as third and fourth lieutenants, strove to get the crew into their places.

The *Chesapeake*, very brave in her display of colors, passed the Boston light at about one o'clock in the afternoon and headed away after the *Shannon*, that stood off shore, with a pleasant breeze until 3.40. Then the *Shannon* clewed down and put a reef in her topsails, and thereafter she filled and backed for an hour while the *Chesapeake* was bearing down on her and preparing for battle. "Lawrence displayed great skill and tactics when closing," as the enemy testified, and at 5.50 P.M. luffed up and backed his mainyard within fifty yards of the *Shannon's* weather-quarter instead of wearing down across the stern and raking her as he might have done.

The *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*.—Commencement of the Battle.

From an engraving at the Navy Department, Washington.

That was magnificent for bravery—it was chivalrous to the highest degree—so high as to be beyond the realm of common sense.

Up to this moment neither ship had fired a shot at the other, and both crews stood at their guns in perfect silence. Lawrence, "colossal in figure, with muscular power superior to most men," paced his quarter-deck "fatally conspicuous by his full-dress uniform." Broke, equally courageous and cool, stood upon his deck watching the Yankee. He had foreseen the manœuvre that Lawrence would make and had ordered William Windham, who commanded the fourteenth gun, counting from forward on the weather side of the *Shannon*, to fire as soon as he could see into the second of the ports on the lee-side of the *Chesapeake*.

At precisely 5.50 P.M. Windham pulled the lanyard of his gun and the battle was on. The other guns of the *Shannon* were fired in quick succession and the *Chesapeake* replied with a full broadside. The *Chesapeake* forged ahead slightly and was luffed still more. Her broadsides told with great effect, but the fire of the *Shannon* was more rapid and had such a terrible effect that "the men in the *Shannon's* tops could hardly see the deck of the American frigate through the cloud of splinters, hammocks, and wreck that was flying across it." As seen from above "the deck was covered with a mist

of débris as the mist of spoondrift in a pelting gale."

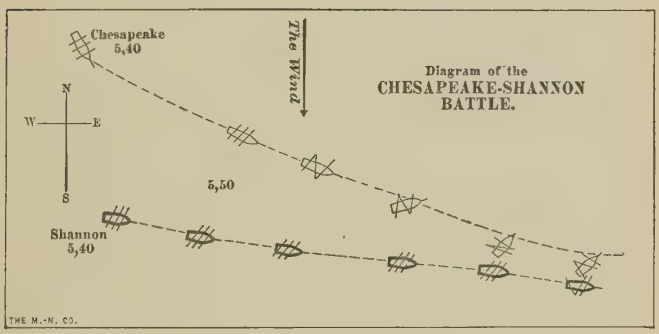
Warmed by the heat of battle, Broke was shouting "Kill the men! Kill the men!" His well-trained sharp-shooters heard and obeyed. Three quarter-masters were shot from the *Chesapeake's* wheel in rapid succession, while Lawrence himself was struck in the leg by a musket-ball. But Lawrence merely rested his weight against the companionway and continued to direct the fight. First Lieutenant Ludlow was mortally wounded, and was carried below. The storm of grape and musket-balls was clearing the whole crew from the upper deck of the *Chesapeake.*

Meantime, having luffed up to deaden her headway, the wind caught the *Chesapeake* aback, and she began to drift astern with her lee quarter exposed to the broadside of the *Shannon.* The *Shannon's* fire was raking her. The brails of her spanker were shot away and the wind caught and spread that sail and so swung her stern still nearer to the *Shannon.* A hand-grenade thrown from the *Shannon* landed in the *Chesapeake's* lee quarter-deck arm-chest, where it exploded the ammunition stored there. The flames spread in a huge flash through the splinters and dust, clear to the forecastle, filling the air with a cloud of smoke. The rigging of the *Chesapeake* was badly cut. Her boatswain

The *Chesapeake* and *Shannon.*—After the first two broadsides from the latter.
From an engraving at the Navy Department, Washington.

and sailing-master were dead. There was no one forward to see the orders of Captain Lawrence obeyed. The *Chesapeake* was drifting stern on into the *Shannon*, and ten minutes after the fight began the two ships fouled.

At that Lawrence called for boarders, but the bugler, who was a negro landsman, had hidden himself, frightened half to death. Still a few men answered the call, but they were to try to repel boarders rather than to board. A desper-



ate hand-to-hand conflict followed at the rails of the two ships. Brawny Boatswain Stevens, who boasted that he had served under Rodney, lashed the ships together, though an American slashed off his left arm with a cutlass as he took the last turn, and thus inflicted a mortal wound.

But the end was at hand. Lieutenant Law, of the British marines, recognizing Lawrence, fired at him, and the ball pierced his abdomen. A few minutes after he had been carried below

he noticed that the fire had slackened greatly. He at once "forgot the anguish of his wounds, and having no other officer near, ordered John Dip, the surgeon's mate in attendance on him on deck to "*Tell the men to fire faster, and not give up the ship;* the colors shall wave while I live."

But that was an order that could not be obeyed. Captain Broke had called his men to the rail to repel boarders, and quickly observed the confusion following after Lawrence was carried below. Throwing down his trumpet and drawing his sword, he shouted to his men the inspiring order:

"Follow me!" And at 6.02 P. M. he stepped over the *Shannon's* rail to the muzzle of one of the *Chesapeake's* quarter-deck guns and thence leaped to the deck of the *Chesapeake.* He was followed by twenty of his men.

A few Americans, led by Parson Samuel Livermore, the ship's chaplain, made a "desperate but disorderly" resistance. The parson fired a pistol at Broke but missed him, and before he could recover his extended arm, the captain with a "backward stroke of his good and mighty Toledo blade," sliced it almost clear of his shoulder, and "felled the patriot to the deck." Then the boarders charged along the platforms (gangways) on each side of the *Chesapeake* leading to the forecastle deck.

"Don't Give Up the Ship!"

Death of Captain Lawrence

From an engraving by Hall of the picture by Chappel.

Forty-four marines had been stationed on the upper deck under Lieutenant James Brown. Of these men, fourteen were already dead, including the lieutenant and a corporal, while two sergeants and eighteen others were wounded. There were left nine marines under a corporal on the forecastle, where some of the sailors remained also. These met and held the dashing Broke and his men at bay until reinforcements came. It was now indeed a desperate fight for the few Americans. The *Chesapeake's* mizzen-topmen were firing on the boarders with good aim. A long-nine was fired from the *Shannon* at this top and the charge cleared the top as a charge of bird-shot destroys a huddled covey of quails. The fore and maintopmen of the *Shannon* silenced the maintopmen of the *Chesapeake*—silenced them in death. Then fresh men came to the aid of Broke, who "was still leading his men with the same brilliant personal courage he had all along shown. Attacking the first American who was armed with a pike, he parried a thrust from it and cut down the man; attacking another, he was himself cut down" with a blow that laid open his skull and exposed his brain. He was saved by Gunner Windham, who fired the first shot of the battle. Windham inflicted a mortal wound on the American. But though this American was dying, he still fought on. Clutch-

ing a bayonet, he strove to drive it into the English commander, who in turn was trying to kill the American with a dagger, but the American proved the stronger and would soon have ended Broke when a British marine came to the rescue. In the excitement the marine was about to bayonet his own commander, who was underneath the American, but Broke called out:

"Pooh! Pooh! you fool! Don't you know your captain?" So the American was killed instead.

So stubborn was the resistance that the Englishmen would have been repulsed but for the reinforcements, who when they came gave no quarter. They killed every American on the forecastle.

Meantime word was carried below to the Americans that the British were on the upper deck. Instantly the Portuguese mutineer took the gratings from the hatch leading to the lower hold and climbed down, shouting "So much for not paying men prize-money."

He was followed by about all the foreigners. Lieutenant George Budd and a dozen veteran American seamen started for the upper deck, but on reaching it Budd was struck and knocked down the hatchway. The "novices held back." There were not enough veterans to conquer. The *Chesapeake* swung around and broke clear

The *Chesapeake* and *Shannon*.—The *Shannon's* men boarding.

From an engraving at the Navy Department, Washington.

of the *Shannon*, leaving no more than sixty of the British on the *Chesapeake's* deck, but they had the deck. Two volleys were fired down the hatches and the Americans were entirely demoralized. Going aft, the British hauled down the American flag at 6.05 o clock and the battle was ended. They had captured the *Chesapeake* in just fifteen minutes.

On getting the flag down they hoisted it with a white flag to show their victory, but by mistake the sailor doing the work got the white flag under the Stars and Stripes. Seeing this, the men on the *Shannon* opened fire again and killed and wounded a number of their own men, including Lieutenant Thomas L. Watt.

On the weary road to Halifax Lawrence gradually lost strength and became delirious. It is said that then he kept repeating over and over again his last order on the quarter-deck of the *Chesapeake*, "Don't give up the ship." He died before Halifax was reached. Captain Broke, also wounded almost unto death, also became delirious, but before he became so he startled the crews of both ships by ordering a Scotch piper on the *Shannon* to play "Yankee Doodle." "Yankee Doodle" on a Scotch bag-pipe would be startling, at least to Americans, under any circumstances, but this time it was played at night and in a dense fog. It is said that many of the people on both ships

supposed at first that one of the Yankee frigates had "happened along."

The two ships arrived at Halifax on a Sunday morning. "There was a great shout from the people, for they thought our prize was the 44-gun frigate *President*, which had incurred their cordial dislike, but when they heard that it was the *Chesapeake*, and that Lawrence, her commander, was dead, not a huzza was heard, except, I believe, from a brig lying at anchor. Captain Lawrence was highly respected for his humanity to the crew of the *Peacock*, and marks of real grief were seen in the countenances of all the inhabitants, I had a chance to see." So wrote a British officer.

The body of Lawrence lay on the quarter-deck of the *Chesapeake*, wrapped in an American flag. It was placed in a coffin and taken ashore "in a twenty-oared barge, to minute strokes, followed by a procession of boats at respectful distances. It was met by a regiment of British troops and a band that played the 'Dead March in Saul.'" The sword of the American was placed on his coffin, which was then carried away by six of the oldest naval officers in the port. The long procession that followed included many of the wounded of both ships.

Six weeks later George Crowninshield, jr., a privateersman, and ten other ship-masters,

Broke.

The Fight on the *Chesapeake's* Forecastle.

From a lithograph in the "Memoir of Admiral Broke."

went to Halifax in the brig *Henry* under a flag of truce, and brought home the bodies of Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Ludlow, and they were interred in Trinity cemetery, in lower Broadway, New York. The monument of the two men can be seen by the curious wayfarer at the southeast corner of the old brown-stone pile. On the end that faces Broadway are these words:

> Neither the fury of battle, the anguish of a mortal wound, nor the horrors of approaching death could subdue his gallant spirit. His dying words were
>
> "Don't Give up the Ship."

The report of the capture of the *Chesapeake* which was published in London immediately on the arrival of the news was a forged document. Broke was lying delirious in his cabin from the time the *Shannon* arrived in Halifax until after the brig that carried the news to England had sailed. Yet a formal report, signed with his name, was published in London immediately after the brig arrived. And it is this forged document that forms the basis of the British accounts of the fight.

The conventional comparison of the ships shows that the *Chesapeake* carried forty-nine guns, throwing 540 pounds of metal at a broadside, to the *Shannon's* fifty-two, throwing 547 pounds. Her crew numbered 340 to the *Shannon's* 330. The *Chesapeake* lost forty-

seven killed, and ninety-nine wounded, while the *Shannon* lost only twenty-four killed and fifty-nine wounded. "Training and discipline won the victory" over a "scrub" crew; but it should be kept in mind that this crew was untrained because there had been no time to train it. If Captain Lawrence had had the six weeks which the *Java* had before meeting the *Constitution*, it would not have been a "scrub" crew. And it is worth noting that even this crew inflicted far more injury on the *Shannon* than either of the British frigates thus far captured had inflicted on her American antagonist. The *Shannon* was struck by twelve eighteen-pound shot, thirteen thirty-two-pound shot and fourteen bar shot.

"The Americans were filled with a profound gloom and an unreasonable loss of confidence in their navy, while the English gave vent to extravagant demonstrations of joy, simply because an English frigate had captured an American of the same force." Considering the course of the naval war up to that time, however, an unprejudiced student must say that the British joy was not unreasonable if the American gloom was. The British made Broke a baronet and a Knight Commander of the Bath. London gave him a sword and the "freedom of the city." The Tower guns were fired in honor of the victory.

The *Shannon* taking the *Chesapeake* into Halifax Harbor.

From an engraving at the Navy Department, Washington.

The joy which this lone victory gave the British people is the strongest proof of their faith in, and admiration for, American prowess. Broke saw no active service after the battle. He died in 1841.

A song that was published in the British *Naval Chronicle* some months before the battle contained this stanza :

> And as the war they did provoke,
> We'll pay them with our cannon ;
> The first to do it will be Broke,
> In the gallant ship the *Shannon.*

The British Historians unite in asserting that this battle proved conclusively that "if the odds were anything like equal, a British frigate could always whip an American, and that in a hand-to-hand conflict such would invariably be the case."

A French historian, who is accepted as authority by all nations, says of this action :

"Captain Broke had commanded the *Shannon* for nearly seven years ; Captain Lawrence had commanded the *Chesapeake* for but a few days. The *Shannon* had cruised for eighteen months on the coast of America ; the *Chesapeake* was newly out of harbor. The *Shannon* had a crew long accustomed to habits of strict obedience ; the *Chesapeake* was manned by men who had just been engaged in mutiny. The Americans were wrong to accuse Fortune

on this occasion. Fortune was not fickle, she was merely logical. The *Shannon* captured the *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813, but on September 14, 1806, when he took command of his frigate, Captain Broke began to prepare the glorious termination of the bloody affair."

Ye sons of old Neptune, whose spirits of steel
In tempests were hardened, by peril were tempered,
Whose limbs, whose limbs like the wild winds that sweep the
bare keel,
By fetters of tyrants shall never be hamper'd;
'Mid the storm and the flood
Still your honors shall bud,
And bloom with fresh fragrance though nurtured with blood;
For the tars of Columbia are lords of the wave,
And have sworn that the ocean's their throne or their grave!

The chiefs who our freedom sustain'd on the land
FAME'S far-spreading voice has eterniz'd in story;
By the roar of our cannon now called to the strand
She beholds on the ocean their rivals in glory,
Her sons there she owns,
And her clarion's bold tones
Tell of Hull and Decatur, of Bainbridge and Jones;
For the tars of Columbia are lords of the wave,
And have sworn that old ocean's their home or their grave!

She speaks, too, of Lawrence, the merciful brave,
Whose body in death still his flag nobly shielded;
With his blood he serenely encrimsoned the wave,
And surrendered his life but his ship never yielded;
His spirit still soars
Where the sea-battle roars
And proclaims to the nations of earth's farthest shores,
That the tars of Columbia are lords of the wave,
And have sworn that old ocean's their home or their grave!

In Memory of Captain James Lawrence.

From an old engraving.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRIVATEERS OF 1812

PROPERTY AFLOAT AS A PLEDGE OF PEACE—FOREIGN AGGRESSION HAD TAUGHT THE AMERICANS HOW TO BUILD AND SAIL SWIFT CRUISERS—ODD NAMES—THE FIRST PRIZES—COMMODORE JOSHUA BARNEY AND THE *ROSSIE*—A FAMOUS CRUISE—SOME RICH PRIZES WERE CAPTURED, BUT ONLY A FEW OF THE PRIVATEERS MADE MONEY—BEAT OFF A WAR-SHIP THAT THREW SIX TIMES HER WEIGHT OF METAL—A BATTLE IN SIGHT OF LA GUIRA.

Among the people of every civilized nation the possession of property by an individual is, as has often been noted, a pledge of good citizenship. His selfish interest in his property, bluntly speaking, tends to make him behave himself becomingly. And one does not have to study the stories of history very long to see that the same rule applies in a way to nations. The possession of property liable to be lost through war is a pledge of peace on the part of the nation owning it. And of all such property there is none that makes a stronger pledge of peace than the over-sea ship with its cargo. In these last days of the nineteenth century, writers

a-plenty have been found who, forgetting or failing to see this fact, have urged that the United States should agree with other nations that in case of war the private property afloat belonging to the enemy should be exempted from capture and destruction. They have urged that the nations who send ships to sea be exempted from this pledge of peace. Or, to put the matter in another way, they have urged the American people to declare to the aggressive nations of the earth:

"If you wish to go to war with us we will promise you, as an inducement to you to do so, that we will not harm your private property afloat."

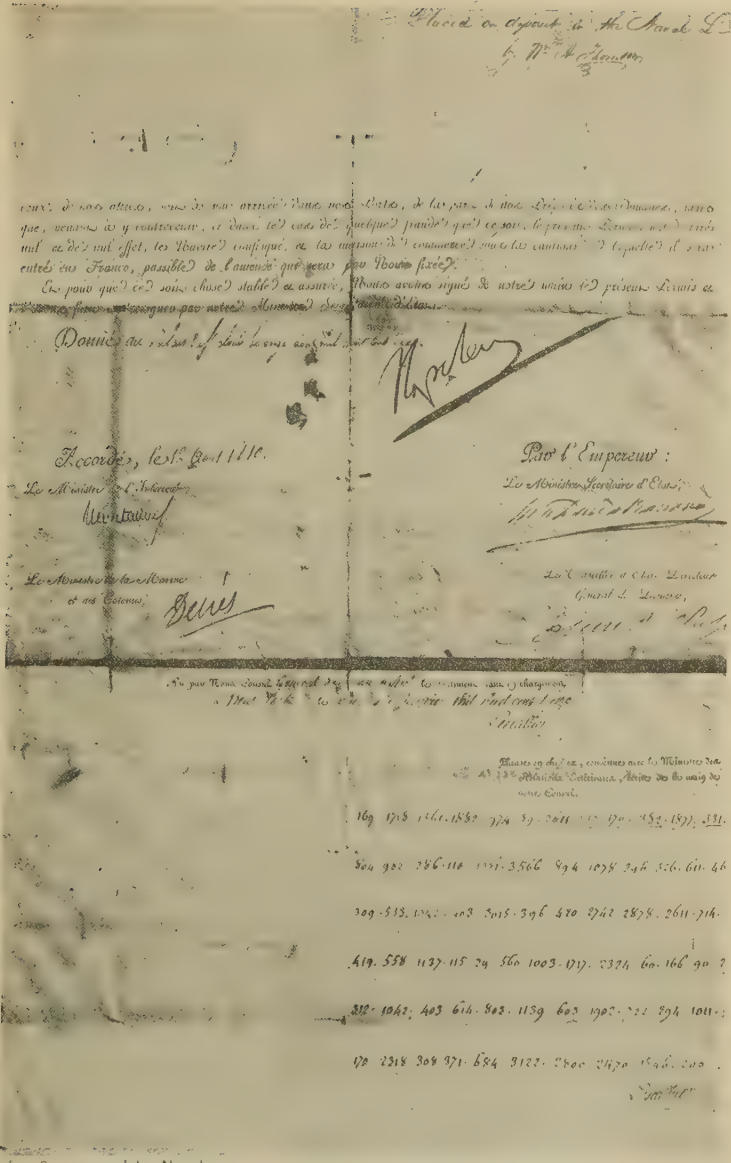
One has only to state the proposition clearly to show its absurdity. The doctrines of the Prince of Peace are never so beautiful as when they are in accord with one's business interests —we are never so horrified by the wickedness of war as when we consider the destruction it would bring upon our property! Can we, indeed, view with complacency the proposition to sink a ship with five hundred unprepared souls by means of a torpedo, and yet shrink from the thought of preserving peace by the threat of capturing and destroying all of the property of an enemy that is found afloat after war is declared?

It is interesting to an American to observe

that of all peoples of the earth the British are the most urgent in their desire that the nations shall agree to do away with this pledge of peace—the English, who are dependent upon over-sea commerce for their bread, who have greater interests on the high seas than any other people, and who are the most aggressive of all people in grasping the territories of the earth. It is interesting to an American because this British wish is a tradition growing out of the damage done by American privateers to British commerce in the wars for American independence and recognition as a nation. As was said of the privateers of the first war, a full volume would be needed to adequately describe all of the doings of these "militia of the sea," but space must be given here to a number of actions fought by the privateers, not only because they were most brilliant, but because they illustrate the character of the American sailor of those days.

No nation was ever as well fitted for a militia contest afloat as was the American in June, 1812. For years her merchants had been harassed by the oppressive legislation of England and France. The American ship that went to sea, no matter what her cargo or destination, was in danger from the cruisers of both nations at once. Even though her voyage was one that must meet the approval of the Euro-

Ship's Papers of the *William Bayard*
From the original at the



in 1810, signed by Napoleon.
Naval Institute, Annapolis.

pean courts in Admiralty, the ship was liable to be seized and carried into port until a judge could pass upon the charge brought by her captors that she was violating some law; and so her voyage would be ruined by delay. But freight rates were high. To deliver one cargo was to pay for the ship, and more too, in profits. The American merchants were enterprising and willing to take risks. And so vessels were built for the trade, brigs and schooners that for that day were marvels of speed. Their enormous spars spread a cloud of canvas so great that as one drove along before a smart gale the long, lean, deep-keeled hull was all but wholly hidden from view—the canvass looked like a fog-cloud drifting swiftly over sea. Better still was their pace when beating to windward, for with yards sharp up and sails down flat, only the crack ships of the enemy could keep them in sight for a day, and few, indeed, could overhaul them. With these over-sparred ships the Yankee sailors were entirely familiar. They carried enormous crews, and the men were proud of their ships and of their own ability to make or take in sail.

When war was declared, there were a number of these in each of the American ports. There were pilot-boats, also, built to race with each other, blow high or blow low. The merchants had seen that war would come. They had

placed orders for more guns with the foundry, and for more ammunition with the makers. They had laid in muskets and cutlasses and provisions and spare sails. There was little if any need for altering the sides of the ships—for piercing the bulwarks with ports—for that was the day of West India pirates, and all ships carried some guns; but amidships in most of them additional stanchions were placed to brace the deck, and there the Long Tom of song and story was mounted—the long, thick-breeched gun that would stand a heavy charge of powder and throw a round ball, weighing sometimes as high as thirty-two pounds, a mile and more, with but moderate elevation of the muzzle.

The small pilot-boats carried anything they could stand under, or get—a long-nine, with a few swivels and a crew of fifty or sixty men who carried muskets and knew how to use them would do. If the men were all seamen as well as good shots, so much the better, but if not, no matter. The landsman who could see through the sights of a musket was by no means refused. He was welcomed and called a marine. The haymaker accustomed to a pitch-fork was just the man to handle a boarding-pike. And so the crews were quickly filled, and then it was up anchor and away to sea for revenge, lawful plunder, and glory. Let the reader make no mistake about the objects in

view when they went to sea. The old sailors were going to repay the scars of the British cat and press-gang manacles that many of them wore; they were going for lawful prizes, and they were inspired by the thought that they were to fight for the honor of "the gridiron flag." The very bravest fights of the whole war—fights in which the Americans unquestionably won through superior pluck—were the fights made by the crews like that of the *General Armstrong* and other American privateers.

That the owners of these privateers had something in mind besides the gaining of wealth will appear at a glance over the list of names of these privateers, of which 250 were commissioned during the war. There were three named *Revenge*, one *Retaliation*, one *Orders in Council*, one *Right of Search*, one *Rattlesnake*, one *Poor Sailor*, one *Patriot*, one *Teaser*, one *Thrasher*, one *United We Stand*, one *Divided We Fall*, one *Scourge*, one *Liberty*, one *True-Blooded Yankee*, one *Castigator*, and so on. And there were others with names significant in still other directions—the *Black Joke*, the *Frolic*, and the *Flirt*, for instance; or the *Saratoga*, the *Yorktown*, the *John Paul Jones*, the *Macedonian*, and the *Guerrière*.

The Congress declared, on June 18, 1812,

that war existed between the United States and England. How soon thereafter the first privateer got away to sea is not recorded, but they were not far behind the squadron of Commodore Rodgers, which sailed the day the news of the declaration of war reached New York. The very first vessel captured in the war was a ship bound from Jamaica to London, that was taken south of the capes of the Chesapeake by a revenue cutter, but the first privateer to bring in a prize was the schooner *Fame*, of Salem, Captain Webb, that arrived home on July 9th, bringing with her a ship of nearly 300 tons, laden with square timber, and a brig of 200 tons, laden with tar. The ship was armed with two four-pounders, but the *Fame* swept up alongside and carried her by boarding without the loss of a man.

On the next day after the arrival of the *Fame*, the schooner *Dash*, of Baltimore, Captain Carroway, captured the first British vessel of war taken—the schooner *Whiting*, Lieutenant Macey—which was lying in Hampton Roads, Chesapeake Bay. Macey had not heard of the war, and the *Dash* took him unawares, and so without resistance.

From that time on the work of the privateers was driven with astonishing vigor. By July 16th there were sixty-five of these volunteers on the high sea, and almost every day one

or another was returning with a prize. The report of a fight with a British man-of-war was not, naturally, long in reaching port. The *Dolphin*, Captain Endicott, and the *Polly*, Captain Handy, both of Salem, Massachusetts, were cruising to the eastward in the region to which Washington had sent his first cruisers in 1775. On July 14, 1812, these two fell in with a ship and a brig, which they supposed to be merchantmen, and made sail for the ship, because she was the larger. On arriving almost within gunshot, however, they saw she was a sloop-of-war, the *Indian*, of twenty-two guns. Thereat they fled, with the *Indian*, blossoming studding-sails, in pursuit of the *Polly*, and firing long bow-chasers in the vain hope of reaching her. Eventually the breeze failed so far that the *Indian* manned her launch and a number of smaller boats, with a four-pounder in the launch. These quickly came within musket shot, and with three cheers made a brave dash at the Yankee. To this the *Polly* replied with muskets and with several of her broadside guns loaded with langrage—langrage being a polite name for scrap-iron. The launch was compelled to strike her colors, while the other boats made haste back to the *Indian*. However, the launch was not captured, for the *Indian* had been drifting slowly within range, and the *Polly* had to take to her sweeps to escape. The attacking party numbered forty.

Battle between the Schooner *Atlas* and two British Ships, August 5, 1812.

From a lithograph in Coggeshall's "Privateers."

Meantime the stanch privateer *Madison*, Captain Elwell, of Gloucester, had happened along where the brig was lying-to, waiting for the return of the *Indian*, and the brig was captured. She proved to be the transport *Number 50*, a vessel of 290 tons, loaded with army supplies, including 100 barrels of powder, 880 uniforms for the 104th British Regiment, bales of fine cloth for officers' wear, camp equipage, etc., in all valued at $50,000.

Within a few days the *Madison*, although armed with but one long gun, captured a ship armed with twelve guns, and sent her into port, and later still, the brig *Eliza*, of six guns. The *Teaser*, of New York, Captain Dobson, had the luck to fall in with the American ship *Margaret*, that had been captured by the British. She was sent to Portland, where she and her cargo of "salt, earthenware, and ironmongery" were valued at $50,000. In short, the privateers were making light work of the coasters that flocked between the ports of the British possessions at the north.

But the most interesting cruise of all that were made in the early days of the war was that of Commodore Joshua Barney in the Baltimore clipper-schooner *Rossie*, of fourteen guns and 120 men. The reader will remember Barney. He was made a lieutenant in the American navy on July 2, 1776, although then but seven-

teen years old. He was in the *Andrea Doria* when she whipped the *Racehorse*, and he commanded the Pennsylvania cruiser *Hyder Ali* when she met the *General Monk*, of vastly superior force, and whipped her so badly that the British historians never recover sufficiently from the shock the story gives them to explain their conflicting statements about the battle.

When war was declared in June, 1812, Barney began fitting out the schooner *Rossie* at Baltimore; on July 12th he sailed away, and from the time he cleared the capes of the Chesapeake he had such lively times as must have reminded him forcibly of revolutionary days. On July 22d he captured the American brig *Nymph*, that was violating the non-importation act. The next day he successfully dodged a British frigate that fired twenty-five shots at him. On July 30th he escaped another British frigate by superior sailing. On July 31st he captured the British ship *Princess Royal*, and burned her. Next day the ship *Kitty* became his prize, and was found worth sending in. The day after this, August 2d, he captured four different vessels—the schooner *Squid* and the brigs *Fame*, *Devonshire*, and *Two Brothers*. On the last of these he placed sixty of his prisoners, and sent her as a cartel to St. John, New Brunswick, but while still sailing along in company with the *Two Brothers*, on August 3d, he

fell in with and captured the brigs *Henry* and *William* and the schooners *Racehorse* and *Halifax*, and so added forty more prisoners to those on the *Two Brothers*. The brig *Henry* and the two schooners were sunk as not worth sending to port, while the *William* was sent to port. He had taken eight vessels in two days.

With the cartel *Two Brothers*, that he sent to St. John, he despatched a letter to Admiral Sawyer, commanding the Halifax Station, in which he asked the admiral "to treat the prisoners well, and assured him very coolly that he should soon send him another ship-load of captives for exchange."

Six days later (August 9th) he had a brush with the British ship *Jenny*, of twelve guns, but she soon surrendered to his superior force. Then he captured two more American ships that were violating the non-importation law, and after forty-five days from the day he left Baltimore he anchored at Newport, Rhode Island. He had captured fourteen vessels, aggregating 2,914 tons in measurement, and one hundred and sixty-six prisoners, the whole value of prizes and cargoes being $1,289,000. Five only of the prizes were sent to port.

After resting in port until September 7th the Commodore sailed again. On the 9th a British squadron of three ships vainly tried to overhaul him, and on the 12th a British frigate

chased him for six hours, and then gave it up. On the 16th the *Rossie* fell in with the British ship *Princess Amelia*, an armed trader, and for an hour there was a steady combat. The *Rossie* was badly cut up in sails and rigging, but her hull and spars escaped. She had seven men hurt—one severely. The *Princess* was badly cut alow and aloft, and had her captain, her sailing-master, and a seaman killed, and seven wounded before she surrendered.

On this same day the *Rossie* fell in with three ships, and a man-of-war brig that was too strong for her—at least the Commodore hauled off after getting an eighteen-pound shot through the *Rossie's* quarter. But he hung about the fleet for three days trying to separate them, though without success. Later, while cruising with the privateer *Globe*, Captain Murphy, of Baltimore, the British schooner *Jubilee* was taken, and the American ship *Merrimack* was taken by Barney alone for violating the non-importation law. He returned to Baltimore on November 10th, having taken and destroyed shipping and cargoes to the value of $1,500,000, with two hundred and seventeen prisoners.

The *Globe*, while cruising alone before meeting the *Rossie*, had a stirring time with the British letter-of-marque *Boyd*. It was on July 31st, and there was a gale blowing when the *Globe* began the chase. It was three hours

The *Rossie* and the *Princess Amelia.*
From a lithograph in Coggeshall's "Privateers."

before she got within range. Then she opened the combat with her Long Tom amidships—a gun that could throw accurately a nine-pound, round, cast-iron ball to a distance of, perhaps, half a mile—a long nine, in short. The *Boyd* replied with two long nines, but fired wildly, and the *Globe* was able to range up where her short guns could bear. There were four of these on a side. The enemy carried two more guns than the *Globe*, and worked them vigorously until the *Globe* ranged up where muskets were used. Then the *Boyd* struck. The kind of marksmanship exhibited is shown by the fact that no one was hurt on either vessel. The *Boyd* was sent in. On August 14th the *Globe* captured a schooner of four guns, loaded with mahogany, and a few days thereafter brought to Hampton Roads "a large British ship carrying twenty-two guns, richly laden, which she captured not far from the Bermudas."

Reports that give the values of some of the "richly laden" ships are by no means lacking. The privateer *Paul Jones*, Captain Hazard, of New York, before August 1st had captured fourteen British vessels in the West Indies, and early in August took the *Hassan*, bound from Gibraltar to Havana, "with wines and dry-goods, valued at $200,000." The *Hassan* carried fourteen guns, but only twenty men. She held out for half an hour. About the same

time Captain Thomas Boyle, of the Baltimore clipper *Comet*, captured the *Hopewell*, from Surinam for London. She was valued at $150,000. To this prize Captain Boyle added "the first-class British ship *Henry*, four hundred tons burden, coppered to the bends, mounting four twelve-pounders, and six six-pounders, bound from St. Croix for London," with seven hundred hogsheads of sugar, and thirteen pipes of old Madeira wine; this vessel and cargo produced a clear profit to the captors of more than $100,000. A little later, the *Saratoga*, of New York, Captain Riker, captured the *Quebec*, from Jamaica, and she was valued at $300,000. She was armed with sixteen guns, and carried a crew of fifty-two. And then there was the ship *Richmond*, of fourteen guns, and twenty-five men before the mast, "eight hundred tons burden, deeply laden with West India produce, worth $200,000," that was taken by the privateer *Thomas*, and sent into Portsmouth.

While the privateers were out for the property they could capture, their deeds were by no means untempered with generosity. The *Benjamin Franklin*, Captain Ingersoll, of New York, took the *Industry*, valued at $2,000, and brought her in. But on learning that she was the sole property of a widow, the owner of the privateer delivered her over to her captain.

It should not be inferred from these facts that all the privateers prospered, or even that they generally did so. Privateering was quite as much of a lottery as speculation in gold mines. In the first place, a privateer cost a good deal of money, for that day. The *Governor Tompkins* cost $20,000. Under Captain Joseph Shumer she carried a crew of one hundred and forty-three men with fourteen guns. Shumer captured twenty vessels. She was then sold at auction for $14,500, and under a new captain tried cruising but never made another capture. The port of New York boasted of one hundred and twenty privateers during this war. The *Scourge*, of nine guns and one hundred and ten men, took twenty-seven prizes. The *Saratoga*, of sixteen guns and one hundred and forty men, took twenty-two prizes. The *Prince de Neufchâtel*, Captain J. Ordronaux, with seventeen guns and one hundred and twenty-seven men, took eighteen prizes. The *Divided We Fall*, with but three guns and fifty men, took sixteen prizes, while her sister ship, *United We Stand*, got but one. Of the whole one hundred and twenty, only forty-one got any prizes at all, and of the forty-one, seven got but one prize each, and eleven but two. When court fees and duties on the goods captured had been paid there was so little left for the privateers and their crews that the ships

capturing only two prizes really made nothing for the owners. Only about one privateer in five, sailing out of the port of New York, paid a cent of profit to the owners. Many were lost altogether—were captured by the enemy, and these were lost because the militia crews, like shore militia, became panic-stricken at an inopportune time.

After recalling the fact that the London *Times* said in March, 1813, that the Yankee privateers had captured five hundred British ships in seven months, the story of the doings of these mosquitoes during 1812 may very well conclude with the accounts of two battles off the South American coast in the month of December of that year. The first was that between the American brig *Montgomery*, Captain Upton, of Boston, and the British war-brig *Surinam*, mounting guns common to such brigs—eighteen short thirty-twos and two long nines—a better armament, in fact, than the *Peacock* had when defeated by the *Hornet*, for the *Peacock* had twenty-fours instead of thirty-twos. On December 6th the *Montgomery* got alongside of the *Surinam* by mistake, and, although armed with but ten six-pounders and two short eighteens, she remained there for half an hour, when the *Surinam* was glad to let her go. The *Surinam* threw 297 pounds of metal at a broadside, or eighteen pounds more than the *Hornet*

Battle between the Schooner *Saratoga* and the Brig *Rachel.*
From a lithograph in Coggeshall's "Privateers."

threw in fighting the *Peacock*. The *Montgomery* threw 48 pounds of metal at a broadside—allowing that the American shot were of full weight.

The facts above given are taken from Coggeshall's "History of the American Privateers," written in 1856. The author, who was himself a vigorous captain in the privateer service, ends his account of this fight by quoting a stanza of what was a favorite song with the British tars before that war:

> Britannia needs no bulwarks,
> No towers along the steep;
> Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
> Her home is on the deep.

The last privateer's encounter of the year 1812 to be described occurred on December 10th. The schooner *Saratoga*, Captain Charles W. Wooster, after a voyage of twenty-four days, in which nothing was seen, reached La Guayra, Venezuela, on December 9th. When she entered port the Spanish commandante threatened to open the batteries on her and she was obliged to leave. However, on beating up to windward she met a British schooner with $20,000 worth of dry-goods on board, which compensated for her ill-treatment ashore, and during the rest of the day she lay-to in plain sight of the town. The next morning there was a heavy fog on the water, but when at 9 o'clock this cleared off,

the *Saratoga* was seen still in the offing, but preparing for battle with a brig. The entire population of the town mounted to the house-tops to watch the contest, and shortly before noon had the satisfaction of seeing the *Saratoga* open fire with her starboard bow gun. The brig replied with vigor, and in a very short time both vessels were buried out of sight in a thunderous cloud of smoke that was constantly illuminated by flashes of flame—a cloud like that in which the *Constitution* and *Java* fought.

For a few minutes this cloud swelled up in cumulous folds, and then the flames and thunder ceased and the cloud drifted away down the breeze leaving the two vessels in plain sight and the "gridiron flag" still flying from the trucks of the *Saratoga.*

This was on the 10th. For three days the people waited and wondered, and then a ship's long boat came ashore. She brought the second mate and twenty-five seamen of the brig—the *Rachel,* from Greenock, mounting twelve long nines, manned by a crew of sixty, and carrying a cargo invoiced at £15,000—$75,000 in gold.

CHAPTER XII

EARLY WORK ON THE GREAT LAKES

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL REGION UNMARRED BY THE HAND OF MAN IN THOSE DAYS — THE LONG TRAIL TO OSWEGO — THE FIRST YANKEE WAR-SHIP ON FRESH WATER—THE BRITISH GET AHEAD OF US ON LAKE ONTARIO — GOOD WORK OF "THE OLD SOW" AT SACKETT'S HARBOR — A DASH INTO KINGSTON HARBOR — THE STORY OF THE BRILLIANT WORK BY WHICH JESSE D. ELLIOTT WON A SWORD AND THE ADMIRATION OF THE NATION.

THE student of American naval history who with weary toil reads through the proceedings of the Congress for the year 1813, finds two paragraphs marked "approved January 29," that, because of the matters to which they refer, stir him as not many other paragraphs of all the printed proceedings of that legislative body from its first gathering down to the present day are able to do. They are brief—the first contains sixteen printed lines, and the last only seven. But in the first, gold medals are awarded to Hull, of the *Constitution*, Decatur, of the *United States*, and Jones, of the *Wasp*, for the astounding results they achieved in their combats with the *Guerrière*, the *Macedonian*,

From a lithograph at the Navy Department, Washington.

and the *Frolic*. And in the second the President of the United States "is requested to pre-

sent to Lieutenant Elliott, of the Navy of the United States, an elegant sword, with suitable emblems and devices, in testimony of the just sense entertained by Congress of his gallantry and good conduct in boarding and capturing the British brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia*, while anchored under the protection of Fort Erie."

It was no small honor to have one's name mentioned in connection with Hull, Decatur, and Jones, but a few months later (July 13, 1813) Elliott's name once more appears in an act of Congress, this time in connection with that of Lawrence. Lawrence and his men get $25,000 for the destruction of the *Peacock;* Elliott "and his officers and companions" get $12,000 for the destruction of the *Detroit.*

The fight in which Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott won these honors, if compared gun for gun and man for man with the battles of the great naval heroes with whom his name was mentioned, was but small and unimportant. They fought with well-manned, fully equipped ships on the high seas; he in row-boats on a fresh-water lake in the backwoods, and armed with borrowed weapons. But when considered in its proper light—when considered in its influence upon the Americans and on the enemy, and especially when considered in its influence as the forerunner of the great fresh-water battles where Perry and Macdonough won glory, this was a most important

conflict ; for it fired the hearts of the Yankee frontiersmen at a time when such disasters as the surrender of Detroit to the British had made some kind of encouragement most needful.

But before recounting the stirring events of the night when this Yankee seaman earned his first honors, it is important to recount, as briefly as may be, how it happened that Elliott, a salt-sea sailor, was found on a fresh-water sea in the backwoods.

It is a delight to the student who loves nature to think of the American frontier as it was in the days of 1812. For in those days the forest stretched away from Maine along the swift St. Lawrence and the green waters of the Great Lakes to end at the prairies of the far West. It was a country as God made it and almost unmarred by the bungling hand of man. The moose and the red deer, the wild turkey and the partridge, roamed undisturbed at will, and the settlers who had gathered at widely separated points must needs provide bounties on wolf and panther and wild-cat scalps to protect their cattle and sheep, their ducks and chickens. To go to the St. Lawrence River the traveller found it most convenient to go up the Hudson to the head of navigation, and then, after carrying his burden overland to Lake George, proceed by the way of Lake Champlain. To the

east of this there was no highway through the vast forest. To the west lay the Adirondacks. To reach the Great Lakes the traveller must needs leave the Hudson for the Mohawk, and travel up its winding course in the shoal-draft scows called batteaux that were pushed along by poles, just as the Big Sandy and Tug Rivers in the Kentucky mountains are navigated at this day. At Little Falls was a portage where the Indians and the Dutch used to compete for the privilege of carrying goods around the broken water, and thereafter the route as far as where Rome now stands was usually unimpeded. This place reached, another portage must be made to Wood Creek, that flowed toward Lake Ontario, and so at last the traveller saw from the bluffs of Oswego the wide water before him. There were, indeed, roads along these routes—trails, properly speaking, over which one could drive a wagon in the dry months of summer and early fall, and a sled after the snow came in winter. In the wet seasons these trails were practically impassable.

Nevertheless, when the Congress discussed schemes for resenting British aggression, the invasion of Canada was always mentioned first of all!

To operate against Canada effectually it was necessary to have a naval force on the great fresh-water lakes of Erie and Ontario. When

the British ship *Leopard* attacked the *Chesapeake* in order to impress upon American minds that once an American citizen was impressed into the British Navy he must remain there until the British Government saw fit to release him, the American Congress was stirred so far as to order a war-brig built on Lake Ontario. She was begun at Oswego in 1808, and

Sackett's Harbor, 1814.

launched as the *Oneida* in 1809, under the command of Lieutenant Melancthon Woolsey, U. S. N. During this year also Sackett's Harbor was chosen as a naval station, and some military companies were stationed there. Arsenals were established by New York State in Champion Village and at Watertown, both not

far from Sackett's Harbor. And thereafter the embargo acts of one kind and another gave sufficient excuse to the people of that region to make very lively times, both afloat and ashore, until, in 1812, the war came.

In fact war began here before it was declared at Washington. The British merchant-schooner *Lord Nelson* was found in American waters and captured by the *Oneida* on May 12th. She was condemned for violating the Embargo Act. In June the British merchant-schooner *Niagara* was taken and sold for violating the revenue laws. These seizures were revenged after the war began by an energetic Canadian named Jones, who organized a party and captured two of a fleet of eight American merchant-schooners trying to flee from Ogdensburg to Sackett's Harbor. The two were burned.

Meantime, it should be said that while the American shores were sparsely settled, the Canadian side of the waters was very well settled, Kingston being the chief naval and military post. And while the Americans were building one slow brig to prepare for the inevitable war, the British had built and armed a squadron of six vessels that included the *Royal George*, of twenty-two guns, *Prince Regent*, of sixteen guns, *Earl of Moira*, of fourteen guns, and three smaller ones carrying fourteen, twelve, and four guns

—in all eighty-four guns. These were commanded by a Commodore Earle. It is worth noting here that the British historians all speak of these vessels and their crews as Canadians as distinguished from the British, and that the Canadian seamen are everywhere denounced as cowards, just as the Yankee seamen were. However, the distinction between "colonists"

and the "British" is made by English writers to this day.

Commodore Earle decided in July to capture the *Oneida*, that was lying in Sackett's Harbor, and destroy the little fort there. Rumors of his coming having reached the station, Woolsey, who still commanded the *Oneida*, prepared to fight in spite of the overwhelming odds against him. A long thirty-two had been sent

up from the coast for the *Oneida* some time before, but it had proved too heavy for her, and it had therefore been allowed to lie half-buried in the mud on the shore of the bay, where, because it lay comfortably in the mud, it was known as "The Old Sow." This was placed in the fort on the bluff overlooking the channel into the harbor, with a couple of sixes and a couple of nines beside it. Next, the *Oneida* was moored outside of Navy Point where she could rake the channel, and then nothing more could be done but fight it out as best they might.

On the morning of July 19, 1812, the British squadron appeared. It was "a lovely Sabbath morning," with a head-wind for the British, who came beating up past Horse Island. By 8 o'clock they were within range and a lake mariner, Captain William Vaughan, let drive with "The Old Sow" at the *Royal George*. He didn't have the range that time and the British laughed and jeered loudly. On their getting nearer, however, the firing from the shore began to tell. The *Royal George* caught one shot below the water-line and one higher up in the hull. The *Prince Regent* and the *Earl of Moira* were struck. The shot from the ships all fell on the beach, save one that landed in the yard of the old Sacket mansion, where Sergeant Spies picked it up, and carrying it to Captain Vaughan, he said:

"I have been playing ball with the red coats and have caught 'em out. See if the British can catch back again."

Captain Vaughan loaded the ball into the old gun. At that moment the *Royal George* was wearing around to fire a broadside and was stern on to the fort. Taking careful aim Captain Vaughan fired, and the shot "struck her stern, raked her completely, sent splinters as high as her mizzen topsail-yard, killed fourteen men and wounded eighteen." So said a deserter. The British never published an account of their losses that day, and the story is probably true, because Commodore Earle hauled off while a Yankee band played "Yankee Doodle," and the first battle of Sackett's Harbor was ended. "Nothing animate or inanimate on shore had been injured in the least."

The next attack was on the six schooners at Ogdensburg, that had escaped the valiant Jones, of Canada. The British sent two vessels, one of fourteen and one of ten guns, to Prescott, opposite Ogdensburg. The Americans sent an Oswego-built schooner called the *Julia*, armed with a long thirty-two and two long sixes, and manned with thirty men, to convoy these schooners to Sackett's Harbor. A big, open boat with some sharpshooters went along. This squadron of two, mounting three guns, "encountered and actually beat off, without

Captain Woolsey.

From a painting at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

losing a man," the two British ships that mounted twenty-four guns between them. The words quoted are from James, the British historian, and his figures are given as to the armament. It is therefore altogether probable that

the two beaten Britishers carried at least ten more guns than the figures given.

Thus Commander Woolsey added five small schooners to his fleet; later in the autumn he added four more. Meantime, Commodore Isaac Chauncey was appointed to command the forces on the Great Lakes; he brought a gang of ship-carpenters to Sackett's Harbor, and one hundred experienced officers and seamen, besides guns, etc. The Commodore arrived on October 6th. On November 26th he launched a ship built of timber that stood in the forest when he arrived, and she was able to carry twenty-four short thirty-twos. And that was neither the first nor the last time that Yankee carpenters showed the world how to build a ship in a hurry.

But while the carpenters worked, the Commodore went afloat with the *Oneida* and six armed schooners on October 8th. And then there was a fight over at Kingston. Finding the *Royal George* out at the False Duck Islands the Commodore chased her into Kingston Harbor, and then at 3 o'clock he decided to run in and see what sort of defences the port had. Two of his schooners were off chasing merchantmen, but the remaining four, carrying a long thirty-two each, went in ahead of the *Oneida*. One, the *Pert*, had the misfortune to burst her big gun. Her commander, Sailing-

master Arundel, was badly hurt and four others slightly. Arundel refused to leave the deck, but by accident fell overboard and was drowned. The other schooners kept up a brisk fire on the five batteries about the harbor, while the *Oneida*, which carried only sixteen short twenty-fours, holding her fire, ranged up beside the *Royal George* and then gave it to her. In twenty minutes the British had had enough of it, and chopping their rope cables they ran their ship to the shore where the water was so shoal that the holes in her hull couldn't sink her and a big body of troops could defend her. Then finding the shore batteries too heavy and the wind rising against his course out of the harbor, Chauncey retreated. The *Royal George* had been well beaten and the schooner *Simeo* sunk. And thereafter four schooners sufficed to blockade the port of Kingston until the ice relieved them of the task.

The expedition under General Wilkinson that left Sackett's Harbor at the beginning of October, 1813, to attack Montreal, is worth a paragraph, because it shows how utterly futile it usually was and is to give a sailor's work to a landsman. Everything was ready on October 4th, but the order to start was not issued until the 12th, and the order was not obeyed until the 17th. When they did finally get away the huge flotilla of boats was not only overloaded,

but the start was made at night when one of the long, fierce storms of the region was coming on. Fifteen large boats were lost that night, while every soul afloat endured the greatest hardships from wind and sleet. After waiting along-shore and among the islands for the storm to end, the expedition pushed on and reached Grenadier Island on the 20th. They went on

Wilkinson's Flotilla.

From an old wood-cut.

eventually, beginning on the 29th, but the delays had given the enemy every opportunity to gather to oppose the expedition. They passed Prescott on the night of the 6th, but they came to grief when on the 11th they met the enemy at Chrysler's farm, below Williamsburg. Instead of capturing Montreal they built winter-quarters on Salmon River.

Along with Commodore Chauncey came

Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott. He had the confidence of the Commodore and was at once sent forward to Buffalo, where he was "to purchase any number of merchant vessels or boats that might be converted into vessels of war or gunboats," and, further, "to take measures for the construction of two vessels of three hundred tons each, six boats of considerable size, and quarters for three hundred men."

In those days Black Rock was a village about two miles from Buffalo on the road toward Niagara Falls, Main Street being then, as now, the chief thoroughfare of Buffalo, while Black Rock was a settlement at the head of Niagara River. It was at Black Rock that Elliott decided to establish the navy-yard. At first thought this might seem to have been a hazardous undertaking, because almost directly across the river was a strong British post—Fort Erie, which is now chiefly celebrated for having a fine beach, where Buffalo people go when overheated, as New York people go to Coney Island. However, if the British might be expected to try crossing to interfere with Elliott's ship-building, it was also possible for Elliott to keep a good watch on British movements; and this he did.

So it happened that when two brigs came down the lake from Detroit and anchored under the guns of Fort Erie on October 8,

1812, Elliott learned the fact instantly. One of these brigs was of Yankee build. She was new and almost ready for service at Detroit, when that post fell into the hands of the British, and was at once taken into their service and called the *Detroit* to commemorate their taking of the town. The other brig was called the *Cale-*

Detroit in 1815.

donia. She was the property of a British fur-buying company and had come from the upper lakes (although the Americans did not know it at the time) loaded with fine furs to the value of $200,000. What Elliott did know, when he saw the two brigs, was that those two vessels were just what he wanted for use on the lake, and that it would be very much better for the

American cause to go over and take them than to buy and build a score. And this he determined to do.

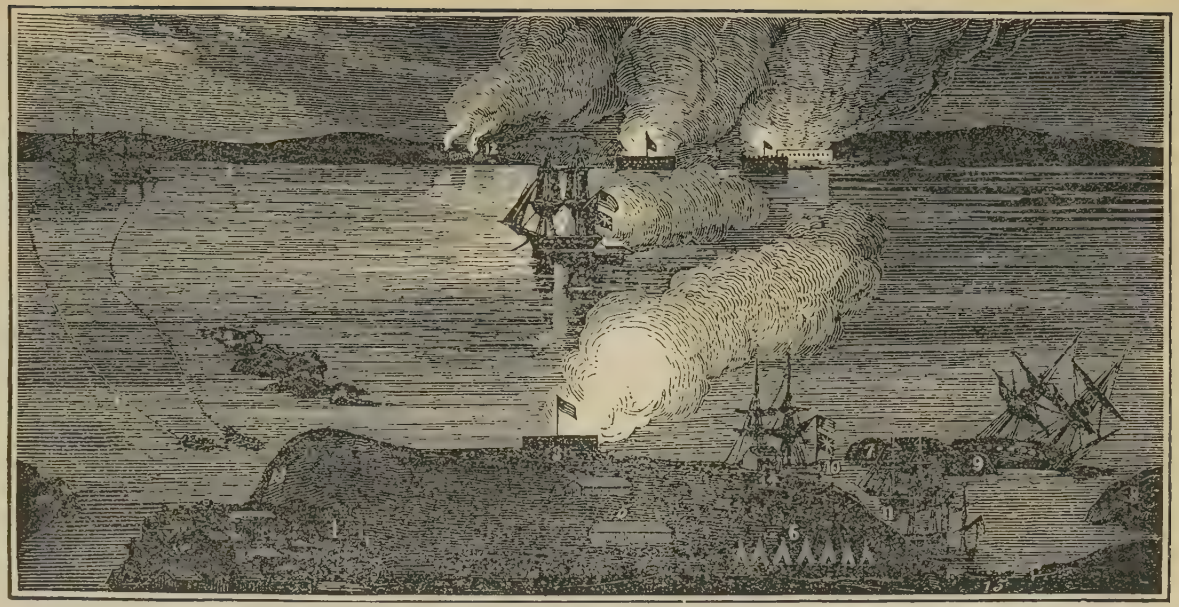
As good fortune had it, a detachment of seamen that included an ensign and forty-seven men and petty officers arrived at Black Rock on the evening of the day when the brigs reached Fort Erie. These men were unarmed, but Elliott was not without resource. At that time Winfield Scott, of whom every school-boy has read, was a lieutenant-colonel in command of troops at Black Rock, and to him Elliott applied for arms and men with success. It is not uninteresting to note that when application was made to the militia for arms for the expedition across the river the order to obtain them read: "all the pistols, swords, and sabres, you can borrow *at the risk of the lenders.*" Enough owners of weapons willing to lend without making a claim on the Government in case of loss were found, and the arms provided for the sailors. A company of fifty soldiers under Captain Towson volunteered to help. Two big boats were prepared in Shajackuda Creek, that empties into the Niagara below Black Rock, and at midnight one hundred and twenty-four men, all told, embarked.

Let it be kept in mind that the *Detroit* was a well-built war-brig, fully armed and manned, that the *Caledonia* was well manned by the

hardy lake seamen accustomed to dealing with the savage Indians of the far West, and that both vessels were anchored under the guns of a strong military post, full of experienced men. There were three batteries of great guns in place, besides field artillery that could be brought to bear in a few minutes. To cut out these two vessels was a task but little less hazardous than the attack which Decatur made on the frigate *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli.

One needs to see the mighty sweep of the Niagara River past Black Rock to appreciate the task of the seamen under Elliott who had to row the boats up stream from the creek and across to the Canadian shores.

They embarked at midnight, and at 1 o'clock found themselves in the current of the Niagara. For two hours thereafter they pulled with steady stroke, and then as the anchor-watch on the *Detroit* was noting the hour of 3, a pistol-shot from a big boat that suddenly loomed alongside, roused the crew from their over-strong feeling of security. A volley of musketry followed and then over the rail tumbled fifty men, led by Lieutenant Elliott, and the *Detroit* was in American hands. The surprise of the *Detroit* was completely successful. A minute or two later the other boat, under Sailing-master Watts, was beside



1. Buffalo.
2. Fort Erie.
3. Black Rock.
4. British batteries.
5. Sailors' barracks.
6. Artillery encampment.
7. Squaw Island.
8. Strawberry Island.
9. *Detroit* aground.
10. *Caledonia* ashore.
11. Navy-yard.
12. British artillery.
13. Point of embarkation.

Capture of the British Brigs *Detroit* and *Caledonia*, October 12, 1812.

From a wood-cut prepared under the supervision of Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott himself.

the *Caledonia*. Her more watchful crew were up and ready to greet these men with a volley, but the attack was resistless and "in less than ten minutes I had the prisoners all seized, the top-sails sheeted home, and the vessels under weigh." So wrote Lieutenant Elliott.

But though under sail the wind was too light to carry the brigs against the current, and they could not reach the lake as they wished to do. The British batteries opened a hot fire. Elliott replied with the guns of the *Detroit* as long as the ammunition lasted, while striving at the same time to get her across to the American side. "For ten minutes she went blindly down the current," while the steady flashing of cannon afloat and ashore illuminated the night, and people ran to and fro on both sides of the river shouting and cheering. And then the *Detroit* grounded on Squaw Island, opposite what is now the foot of Albany Street, Buffalo. The Americans landed their prisoners, forty-six in number, below the island, but before they could return some British regulars had crossed over and captured the *Detroit*. The Yankees, with a six-pounder field-piece on Squaw Island, drove them away, and Winfield Scott and some troops took possession. But she was still within reach of the British long guns, and during the remainder of the night and all the

next day she was under fire. Then the British brought a war vessel, the *Lady Prevost*, to cover them while they were to take her off, and so the Americans fired and destroyed her.

Meantime Elliott had carried the *Caledonia* clear of all, and she was the first member of the fleet that enabled the gallant Perry to write, "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

As already said, the fight, considered beside the salt-sea battles, was only a trifling skirmish, but two British ships were captured, the percentage of damage done to the British power afloat on Lake Erie was tremendous, and as an example of dashing bravery the feat thrilled the whole American nation. Not less marked was its effect upon the British, for General Sir Isaac Brock, who commanded in that department, wrote:

"The event is particularly unfortunate and may reduce us to incalculable distress. The enemy is making every exertion to gain a naval superiority on both lakes, which, if they accomplish it, I do not see how we can possibly retain the country."

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE ON LAKE ERIE

BUILDING WAR-SHIPS AND GUN-BOATS IN THE WILDERNESS—LIFTING THE VESSELS OVER A SAND-BAR—FORTUNATELY THE BRITISH COMMANDER WAS FOND OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS—THE TWO SQUADRONS AND THEIR CREWS COMPARED—THE ADVANTAGE OF A CONCENTRATED FORCE WAS WITH THE BRITISH—ON THE WAY TO MEET THE ENEMY—"TO WINDWARD OR TO LEEWARD THEY SHALL FIGHT TO-DAY"—THE ANGLO-SAXON CHEER—THE BRUNT OF THE FIGHT BORNE BY THE FLAG-SHIP—A FRIGHTFUL SLAUGHTER THERE IN CONSEQUENCE—WHEN PERRY WORKED THE GUNS WITH HIS OWN HANDS, AND EVEN THE WOUNDED CRAWLED UP THE HATCH TO LEND A HAND AT THE SIDE-TACKLES—AN ABLE FIRST LIEUTENANT—WOUNDED EXPOSED TO THE FIRE WHEN UNDER THE SURGEON'S CARE—THE LAST GUN DISABLED—SHIFTING THE FLAG TO THE *NIAGARA*—CHEERS THAT WERE HEARD ABOVE THE ROAR OF CANNON—WHEN THE WOUNDED OF THE *LAWRENCE* CRIED "SINK THE SHIP!"—DRIVING THE *NIAGARA* THROUGH THE BRITISH SQUADRON—THE WHITE HANDKERCHIEF FLUTTERING FROM A BOARDING-PIKE—"WE HAVE MET THE ENEMY, AND THEY ARE OURS."

THIS is the story of Perry's victory. Oliver Hazard Perry, "a zealous naval officer, twenty-seven years of age," of the rank of master commandant, was in command of a fleet of gun-boats at Newport, Rhode Island, during all the glorious days when Hull, Decatur, and

O. H. Perry

From an engraving by Forrest of the portrait by Jarvis.

Bainbridge were winning laurels on the high seas. It was a most irksome service, at best, for the sole purpose of the gun-boats was that of the quills of a porcupine, but when other

men of the navy were abroad showing teeth, the task assigned to Perry was beyond endurance. For a time his appeals for a change were unheeded, but at last, when the operations on Lake Ontario under Commodore Chauncey, and at the foot of Lake Erie, under Lieutenant Elliott, had made an impression on the Navy Department, Perry was ordered to go with "all of the best men of his flotilla" to join Chauncey. It was on February 17, 1813, that his orders reached him, and before night fifty of his men were on their way to the west in sleds. Others followed, and on the 22d Perry himself, with a brother of thirteen, who was eager for adventures, started over the long road—a road so long that, though the sleighing was good, they did not reach Sackett's Harbor until March 3d. For two weeks Perry remained there, awaiting an expected attack from the British that did not come, and then he started on for what was then called Presqu' Isle, but is now the city of Erie, Pennsylvania.

Erie had been chosen as the base of operations for gaining control of Lake Erie for a variety of reasons, the chief being that it had a harbor which was not easy of access by the enemy, that other parts of the lake could be readily reached from it, and that supplies could be sent to it conveniently from Pittsburg by the way

of the Alleghany River, that was navigable, after a fashion, to Lake Chautauqua, or almost to within sight of Lake Erie. The construction of a small squadron of gun-boats and two brigs had been commenced there under an experienced fresh-water seaman, named Captain Daniel Dobbins.

Reaching Black Rock, at the head of the Niagara River, Perry inspected the navy-yard that was then in charge of Lieutenant Petigru (Elliott had returned to Sackett's Harbor), and made note of the vessels there that would be of use in the lake service, and then hastened forward, travelling in a sleigh on what was then the usual highway of the along-shore frontiersmen—the ice on Lake Erie. On the way he stopped at a tavern, that then, and for many years afterward, stood just west of Cattaraugus Creek (a famous smuggling resort in its day). Here Captain Perry learned from his host, who had just returned from a trip across the lake, that the British knew all about the ship-building at Erie, and that they intended coming over to clear out the yard there.

On reaching Erie, Captain Perry found that the keels of two twenty-gun brigs had been laid at the mouth of Cascade Creek; two gun-boats were nearly planked up at the mouth of Lee's Run ("between the present Peach and Sassafras Streets"), and the keel of a third

Port of Buffalo

was stretched on the blocks. To defend these there was a company of sixty volunteers, while Dobbins had also organized the ship-yard hands into a company. But there were neither arms nor ammunition for a fight, and so Dobbins was

in 1815.

sent to Buffalo to get them, while Perry hastened to Pittsburg to hurry on some additional carpenters coming from Philadelphia, to look after the casting of cannon-balls, the forwarding of rope and canvas, and other matters.

On returning to Erie, Perry found that the work had been pushed by the master shipwright, Noah Brown, of New York City, and that Dobbins had brought back a twelve-pounder gun and some arms. The work on the ship was of particular interest, for white and black oak, and chestnut-trees for frames and planking, and pine for the decks, were growing handy by. A tree whose branches swayed to the fierce lake breezes of the morning, was often an integral part of a war-ship when the sun went down at night. The gunboats were floated early in May, and on the 24th the two brigs were launched.

But Perry did not see these brigs take the water. He had learned that Commodore Chauncey's sailors and the American soldiers were to attack Fort George, near the mouth of the Niagara River. Getting into a row-boat with four men, Captain Perry started for Buffalo on the night of the 23d. There was a head-wind all night, but Perry reached Buffalo the next evening, passing down the river within musket-shot of the enemy. Perry reached a village near Grand Island, where he proposed to go ahead on foot, until his sailors captured a horse on the public common—"an old pacing one that could not run away, and brought him in, rigged a rope from the boat into a bridle, and borrowed a saddle without

either stirrup, girth, or crupper." On this Perry mounted, and holding fast by the horse's mane, ambled into the camp at the foot of the river. In the attack on Fort George, on the morning of May 27, 1813, Perry was the most active man in the fleet, rowing hither and yon in directing the landing parties, and constantly exposing himself to the fire of the enemy. But the result of the battle was the complete success of the Americans, and the British abandoned the whole Niagara River.

The advantage of this success to Perry was at once manifest, for the route from Shajackuda Creek up the Niagara River was opened, and the vessels lying there, including the *Caledonia* captured by the brilliant dash of Elliott, were released.

Loading this little squadron of five vessels with all the stores at Black Rock, Perry started on the morning of June 6, 1813, to "track" them up the Niagara to Lake Erie. "Tracking" is a kind of work not unfamiliar even now to canal and river sailors, and lake sailors in those days knew all about it. A long line was stretched out from each vessel along the shore, and then sailors and soldiers clapped on and walked away with the rope. There were a few yoke of oxen to help, but they had a current of from five to seven miles an hour to overcome, and they were six days getting their

vessels out of the river. Sailing from Buffalo on the 13th, they dodged the enemy's fleet of five vessels, mounting forty-four guns, that hove in sight just as Erie was reached, and so made their port in safety, bringing a cargo that was indispensable.

Meantime Perry was so overworked that he was stricken with a bilious remittent fever, but he did not by any means give way to it. The newly arrived vessels were anchored in the bay off Cascade Creek, and thereafter their crews were drilled under Perry's personal supervision "several hours each day" in the work of handling the guns and ships. And so were all the men under Perry's command. But the number of the men was a matter of the greatest worry. The two brigs had been launched, and they, with the three gun-boats, were soon fitted with sails, rigging, and guns, but crews to man them were not to be had. To add to the distress of the young commander the Government at Washington sent him two orders (received on July 15th and 19th), to co-operate with General Harrison, who commanded the American land forces not far from Sandusky. Worse yet, word came that the British had a new and powerful vessel, called the *Detroit*, about completed at Malden on the Detroit River, and that Captain Robert H. Barclay, who had served under Nelson at Trafalgar, had been placed in com-

mand of the British fleet. A little later still Barclay actually appeared off Erie "to have a proper look," as a sailor might say, at what the Yankees had been doing, and so prepare for clearing out the harbor.

Perry's appeal for men became at this time stirring: "For God's sake and *yours*, and mine, send me men and officers, and I will have them all in a day or two," he wrote to Commodore Chauncey. He got some men—"a motley set, blacks, soldiers, and boys." The British historians with one accord say that Perry's men were all "picked men." An American can well afford to excuse them for thinking so when the result of the fight this "motley set" made is considered; but it was a "scrub" crew.

However, by the end of July, having recruited among the landsmen of the region a few men, Perry found that he had about three hundred "effective officers and men, with which to man two twenty-gun brigs and eight smaller vessels."

Although an utterly inadequate force, Perry could no longer restrain his anxiety to try the mettle of the enemy, and on Sunday, August 1, 1813, moved his vessels down to the bar that lies across the bay. He found but four feet of water where six had previously existed, the trend of the wind on this shoal-lake making such variations of depth common. Perry

had already provided means for lifting his new brigs over the bar when the water was six feet deep, for they drew at least eight feet, but now found the task greater than he had supposed. However, after getting the smaller vessels over the bar and posting them where they could make a good fight should the expected enemy arrive, he set to work to lift the brigs over.

One of these brigs had been named the *Lawrence.* It was on June 1st of this year that Captain Lawrence sailed out of Boston in the ill-fated *Chesapeake* to meet the well-found *Shannon*, and was lost. To commemorate the magnificent bravery of this officer, the Secretary of the Navy had named one of the brigs the *Lawrence.* Perry chose that one as his flag-ship. The other was called the *Niagara.* The crews of the fleet set to work on the flag-ship first. Big scows built on a model that would let them lie close alongside the *Lawrence* from stem to stern were filled with water until their decks were awash. Then they were secured to the *Lawrence* in such a way that they could not rise without lifting her. Meantime the guns and all heavy weights had been removed from the *Lawrence*, and the next task was to pump the water out of the scows so that they would lift the man-of-war. When this was done the *Lawrence* was hauled forward on the bar until hard aground, when the scows were once

more filled and lowered and secured to the ship, and a second lift taken, which fortunately carried her clean over. The repetition of this work carried the *Niagara* over as well, and Perry at last had his fleet in deep water. It is easy to tell how the work was done, but it was a job that kept the crews busy day and night from Sunday the 1st until Thursday the 5th of August, 1813.

As good luck would have it, this time passed without a glimpse of the enemy. The people of Port Dover, Canada, had felt the great honor which the presence along-shore of a real British captain who had fought under Nelson conferred upon them. Colonial people are stirred so to this day. To show their appreciation of the honor, the Doverites must needs give a banquet. And Captain Barclay was as fond of festivities as Burgoyne was. Like Burgoyne, he missed an opportunity by attending to festivities instead of to duty. While Perry's men lifted and hauled and strained to get the *Lawrence* across the bar at Erie, Barclay was standing, gorgeous with gold lace, before the much-honored people of Dover and saying:

"I expect to find the Yankee brigs hard and fast on the bar when I return, in which predicament it will be but a small job to destroy them."

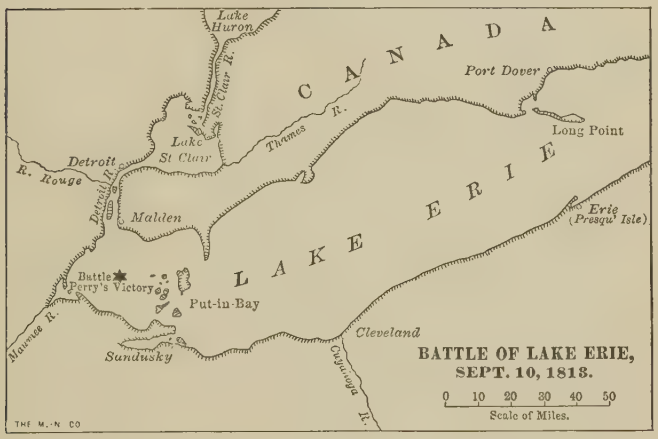
He arrived one day too late, however. The

Niagara was over the worst of the bar, and her crew were at the capstan heaving her afloat when the bold skipper from Trafalgar and Dover appeared. The *Ariel*, a schooner carrying four twelve-pounders and thirty-six men, and the *Scorpion*, a gun-boat that carried thirty-five men and two guns, a long thirty-two and a short one, were sent to meet the squadron and hold it in check until the other ships could be made ready. But they did not have a chance to hold anything except the wind, for Barclay, seeing the Yankees all outside the bar, squared away for Malden, where the new *Detroit* was lying.

For several days Perry cruised to and fro across the lake looking for the enemy, and then, on August 10th, came Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott with one hundred officers and superior men. There is no doubt about the quality of these men, for some of them were from the *Constitution*. They had seen the wreck of the *Guerrière* rolling its guns under water after they had finished shooting at her. Elliott was placed in command of the *Niagara*, and the squadron was now in fair condition to offer fight to the enemy, even though they had added their new brig *Detroit* to their forces. So Perry determined to sail up the lake and join forces with General Harrison.

In that day Put-in Bay, lying a little north

and west of what is now the city of Sandusky, Ohio, was counted one of the best harbors of refuge on the lake. Properly speaking, it was no bay at all, but it was in summer, as it is now, a lovely breadth of water surrounded by a chain of islands, large and small. Here was a good anchorage in a gale, and the main channel would admit easily the largest ship then



afloat on the lake. To Put-in Bay came Perry and his squadron on August 15th. Nothing was seen of the enemy, but near evening on the next day a strange sail was seen dodging around what is now called Kelly's Island, and the *Scorpion*, that was out scouting, gave chase. A thunder-squall came on about that time, and the schooner escaped among the islands.

The next day after this, August 17th, Perry

took his squadron to the point of the peninsula that forms Sandusky Bay and fired signal-guns to apprise General Harrison, who was camped not far away, of the presence of the American ships. On the night of the 19th General Harrison, his staff, and a lot of soldiers and friendly Indians, came off to visit the squadron and talk over plans for a descent upon Malden. Nothing definite was decided on, however, for Harrison was not quite ready to move, and so, on the 23d, the Harrison party having gone away, Perry decided to have a look for himself at the new British ship at Malden. But before he could carry out his purpose he was prostrated by the bilious fever that had been upon him since he had brought the five vessels out of Niagara River. And what was as bad, a very large proportion of his men were in the same distressing condition. The fleet surgeon, Dr. P. Usher Parsons, was himself so ill that he could not walk, but was carried around on a cot to visit the sick, and there were continually more than one hundred of the command prostrated.

This enterprise having been abandoned, the fleet anchored at Put-in Bay once more on August 27th, and there a reinforcement of thirty-six soldiers came on board from General Harrison to act as marines and supply the places

of the sick. But Perry remained sick for a week, and it was not until September 1st that the squadron got away to look at Malden. They got nothing more than a look, for the reason that Captain Barclay kept his fleet under the protection of the shore batteries, waiting for the completion of the *Detroit*. So Perry returned once more to Put-in Bay, and there he remained until September 10, 1813, the most famous date in the history of the Great Lakes, for then came the battle known to every school-boy as "Perry's Victory."

Because this was a battle between squadrons, and the first of that kind in American history, it is worth while considering in advance of the story of the action, what each commander had under him. To begin with the Americans: Perry had nine vessels—the brigs *Lawrence*, *Niagara*, and *Caledonia*, the schooners *Ariel*, *Scorpion*, *Somers*, *Porcupine*, and *Tigress*, and the sloop (single-masted vessel) *Trippe*. The big new brigs were one hundred and ten feet long and twenty-nine feet wide. They could have carried as merchantmen three hundred tons say of coal or grain. The schooners could not have carried more than from sixty to eighty tons of cargo, and the sloop was the smallest of all. The big brigs were armed as salt-sea brigs were—with two long twelves and eighteen short thirty-twos, and the rest were armed

with a heavy gun each, so that the squadron as a whole in the battle threw, it is estimated, eight hundred and ninety-six pounds of metal from fifty-four guns, of which the long guns threw two hundred and eighty-eight pounds. On the day of battle, according to the roll that drew prize-money, the total number of all the men and boys who were connected with the fleet in any way was five hundred and thirty-two. Of these, four hundred and sixteen (the highest estimate) were on deck ready for the fray, and sixteen more (according to Lossing), though on the sick-list, left their beds and went to quarters—in all four hundred and thirty-two men, of whom one-fourth were regular naval seamen, one-fourth were raw militia, and one-fourth were lake sailors.

To oppose this fleet Captain Barclay had six vessels. The *Detroit* was a new ship (three square-rigged masts) and was a trifle larger than the *Lawrence*. She was armed with one long eighteen, two long twenty-fours, six long twelves, eight long nines, a short eighteen, and a short twenty-four. She was therefore more than a match, when at long range, for any three of the American ships so far as weight of metal was concerned. At short range the preponderance was against her. With the *Detroit* were the ship *Queen Charlotte*, a sixth smaller in size than the *Lawrence;*

the *Lady Prevost*, a big schooner (230 tons measurement); the brig *Hunter*, of the size of the *Caledonia;* the little schooner *Chippeway*, and the big sloop (90 tons) *Little Belt.* All told, this squadron could throw four hundred and fifty-nine pounds of metal at a broadside from sixty-four guns, one hundred and ninety-five pounds being from long guns. The "smart Yankees," although Erie was in days' travel much farther from a base of supplies than the British were, had created a fleet under the eyes of the British, whose superiority "in long-gun metal was as three to two, and in carronade metal greater than two to one." So says Roosevelt, an American writer. But it must be observed by every sailorman that this preponderance in weight of metal thrown was to a great extent nullified by the distribution of the American heavy long guns among the little merchant-schooners which Perry had been forced to adopt. For the small vessels formed very unstable platforms, and a discharge of the big guns set them rolling in a way to destroy accurate marksmanship. The British had nothing larger than a long twelve on their little vessels, and therein was wisdom. As the British had a tonnage of 1,460 in six vessels to the American 1,671 in nine vessels, there was a concentration of power in the British fleet of which Captain Barclay was able to take ad-

vantage. Nor was that all that may be said of the superiority of Barclay's vessels, for four of the British fleet were built for war-ships. The difference between a war-ship and an armed merchantman was in those days as great as the difference between a protected cruiser and an armed merchantman in these would be. The sides of the man-of-war were made of frames set so close together as to almost touch each other, and were covered with thick planks. Doubtless the walls of Barclay's four large vessels were more than a foot thick, and so proof against grape-shot. Five of Perry's vessels had planking no more than two and a half inches thick—they could be set aleak by a musket-ball. Worse yet, four of Barclay's vessels had big thick bulwarks, behind which the men were protected from grape-shot, while all of Perry's except the two brigs were without bulwarks—their guns and crews were all in plain view and exposed to the fire of the enemy.

As to the number of men in the British fleet it is certain that they had four hundred and fifty men on deck, "fore and fit," for this number is to be counted up from the prisoners taken with the killed, as admitted by the British authorities. But there were undoubtedly more. Captain Barclay, as appears by the order-books of the British, had in all one hun-

dred and fifty picked men from the British Navy, eighty Canadian lake sailors, and two hundred and forty soldiers from the 41st Regiment of the line, and the Newfoundland Rangers—making four hundred and seventy men, to which sum must be added thirty-two officers known to have been in the fleet. This makes five hundred and two. As only four hundred and fifty can be counted among the prisoners paroled and taken to Camp Portage, it is fair to suppose that a few of the British crews went forward to help their wounded friends who were taken to Erie, that some escaped to the woods, and that more were killed than the British admit.

However it may be figured, the British had more men in the battle than Perry had, and they were concentrated on six ships where they could be of service, instead of scattered among nine vessels of which the majority were slow cargo-carriers, and sure to lag behind when the order to close with the enemy was given. Since Perry had enough men to work his guns, it may be conceded that his inferiority of numbers was a matter of no consequence whatever. But when the concentration of the enemy's power in his large ships is considered—when it is recalled that the *Detroit*, for instance, had seventeen long guns with which to batter the *Lawrence* that had only two as she

headed the dash into battle—seventeen long guns that could and did cut her to pieces before she could bring anything to bear save one long twelve—a candid student of history must say that the British squadron in its power, either for attack or defence against an attacking squadron, was, at the least, equal to the American squadron.

Last of all, and most important of all, comes a comparison of the commanders. To a certain extent this comparison has already been made. As has been told, Barclay, who was thirty-seven years old, came from Trafalgar. Perry, who was but twenty-seven, came from the Newport navy-yard. And that is to say that in experience Barclay was at least "hull down to windward" of the American commander. But experience is only one of the requisites of a great naval commander. It may seem presumptuous for a mere civilian to declare what the qualities of such a commander are; nevertheless, for the sake of a comparison of the two commanders in this battle, and for the sake of having some sort of a lead for trying the depth of them, it may be said that the acknowledged heroes of sea-warfare have shown:

Foresight and unwearied energy in preparing for battle; a bull-dog courage in the face of personal danger; a John-Paul-Jones tenacity

of purpose—the good-will to fight while a plank with a gun floated; a calmness of observation—an eye uninfluenced by excitement when viewing the enemy; a judgment swift to take advantage of every emergency; the ability to inspire the men with confidence.

To a civilian it seems that after personal or animal courage the most important characteristic of a great commander in a squadron battle is the ability to take swift advantage of emergencies, for this, of course, implies his tenacity of purpose and his ability to see clear-eyed.

What Oliver Hazard Perry had done to show whether he had foresight and unwearied energy has already been told. Whether he exhibited, in spite of youth and lack of experience, the other characteristics of a great naval commander the reader shall be able to judge from the story of the battle itself.

It was on September 10, 1813.

September the tenth full well I ween,
In eighteen hundred and thirteen,
The weather mild, the sky serene,
  Commanded by bold Perry,
Our saucy fleet at anchor lay
In safety, moor'd at Put-in Bay;
'Twixt sunrise and the break of day,
  The British fleet
  We chanced to meet;
Our admiral thought he would them greet
  With a welcome on Lake Erie.

Goaded by an impending lack of provisions into trying to open communications with Long Point, where the British had their supplies both for the Malden army and the fleet, Captain Barclay had determined to sail down the lake and meet Perry if he must. It was for this that Perry had been hoping, and "'twixt sunrise and the break of day the lookout at the mast-head of the *Lawrence*, peering into the mists at the north and west, saw the white canvas of the British fleet and bawled in voice heard throughout the fleet,"

"Sail ho!"

It was a cry that brought the officers of the squadron quickly to the decks of their vessels. A moment later signals were fluttering from the mast-head of the flag-ship saying "Enemy in sight," and then others arose which said literally "Under way to get."

The shrill whistle of the boatswains and the hoarse cry of "All hands up anchor" followed.

At this time a gentle southwest wind was blowing from over the Ohio wilderness, bringing a light rain-squall, but the rain quickly passed away and the breeze shifted to northerly. And so the little squadron had to resort to oars as well as sails in beating its way out of the island-locked harbor. There had been no need of a conference among the officers of the squadron this morning, for they had

gathered on the *Lawrence* the night before for that purpose and had heard their young leader end his instructions with the famous words of Nelson, "If you lay your enemy close alongside you cannot be out of your place."

Reaching the open lake the enemy was seen five or six miles away—on the horizon line—the new sails of the *Detroit* gleaming silver-white in the morning sun. The wind, although

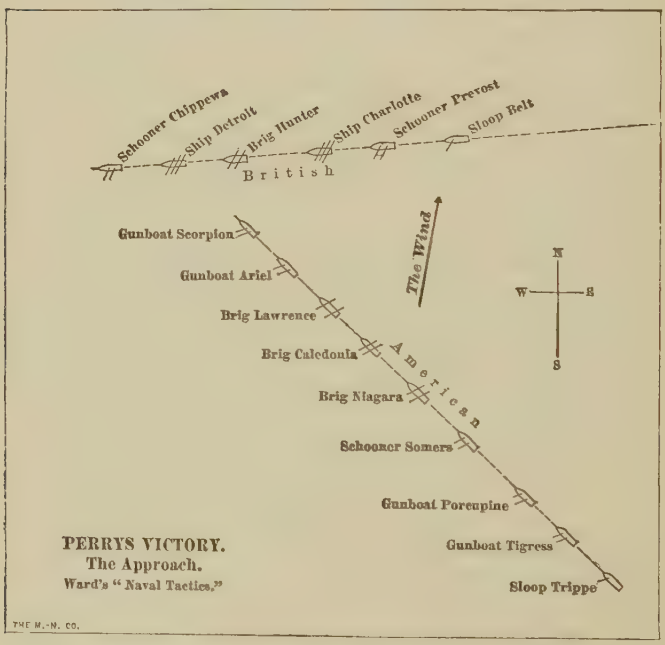
Perry and his Officers on Board the Flag-ship *Lawrence*, Preparing for the Engagement.
From an old wood-cut.

the day was now beautiful to the eye, was variable—first from one quarter and then from another, and not too much of it from any direction. Heading away toward the British squadron, Perry strove as a yachtsman might do to get to windward, but finding that some of the islands were in the way he determined in order to end the jockeying and reach the enemy

the sooner that he would square away under the lee of the islands. As he gave this order his sailing-master ventured to remonstrate:

"Then you will have to engage the enemy to leeward, sir," he said.

"I don't care," replied Perry; "to windward or to leeward, they shall fight to-day."



But before the order could be executed the wind shifted once more and came in a light but fairly steady breeze from the south shore. The Americans now had the weather-gage and could run down with free sheets upon the enemy. At

this the American ships were formed in line of battle upon the plan decided on the night before, and all hands cleared ship for action. This done, the purser brought up from the cabin a roll of bunting, which he handed to Captain Perry. Calling the attention of the men to it as they stood at their guns, Perry spread it out before their eyes—a field of blue bunting more than eight feet square, on which had been sewed in big white muslin letters the last words of the dying Lawrence:

"Don't give up the ship."

"Shall I hoist it?" said Perry to his men, and with one voice they shouted:

"Aye, Aye, Sir!"

A minute later it was run up fluttering to the main truck, and there it remained until one of the most remarkable events known to the history of naval warfare demanded that it be lowered.

By the time this flag was set 10 o'clock had come, and the enemy was still a long way off, for the wind was very light. So Perry, thoughtful for the comfort of his men, ordered food and the usual allowance of grog served to all hands. This done, the mess kits were cleared away, and then men drew water in buckets from over the rail and thoroughly wet down the decks fore and aft, so that powder scattered in the haste of battle might be made harmless.

And when these were wet other men went to and fro sprinkling clean sand, gathered from the lake shore, thickly over the deck. It was to give the men at the guns a good foothold, even when the deck should be flooded with blood.

Meantime Barclay hove to and was awaiting the American squadron, with his ships in line as close together as possible without interfering with each other. As Perry drew near he saw that he would have to change the arrangement of his line in order to place his largest vessels against the largest of the enemy. Barclay had stretched his squadron in a line square across the wind with the big *Detroit* at the head of it, save that the little schooner *Chippeway* was under the *Detroit's* bows. To meet these two came Perry with the *Lawrence*, supported by the little schooners *Ariel* and *Scorpion*. Astern of the *Detroit* were the *Hunter* of ten guns and the *Queen Charlotte* of seventeen. Perry sent the little brig *Caledonia* of three guns against the *Hunter*, but she was to be supported by the *Niagara*, carrying two long twelves and eighteen short thirty-twos, that was primarily to engage the *Queen Charlotte*. Last of all in the British line were the fine schooner *Lady Prevost* with thirteen guns, and the *Little Belt* sloop of three. The four remaining vessels of Perry's squadron, the *Somers*, *Porcupine*,

Tigress and *Trippe*, carrying five heavy guns between them, were assigned to the task of whipping these two that carried sixteen smaller guns.

This disposition made, the American ships drifted on steadily and in silence toward the enemy. It was a trying wait, but Perry paced the full length of his deck, stopping here and there to speak cheerfully to the men. At one gun the crew were all from *Old Ironsides*—the *Constitution*. The most of them were stripped to the waist and had tied long handkerchiefs around their heads to keep their hair from falling across their faces. Perry gave them one look.

"I need not say anything to *you*," he said; "you know how to beat those fellows."

At another place he recognized men he had worked with at Newport, and said:

"Ah, here are the Newport boys; they will do their duty, I warrant."

Wherever he addressed the men he was cheered heartily, and that was an omen worth keeping in mind.

It was at 10.15 A.M. that everything was put in order for the battle, but because the wind was light no less than an hour and a half was passed in reaching the enemy. Indeed, even when 11.45 A.M. had come, the flag-ships were still a mile apart, while the little gun-boats at

the tail of the American fleet had lagged far behind. A mile was a long range for even the long guns of that day, but the mental strain of the prolonged wait had proved too much for British impatience. A bugle rang with the thrilling signal to begin action, a single long gun on the *Detroit's* deck belched flame and smoke, and a round black ball came skipping

The Battle of Lake Erie.
From an old engraving.

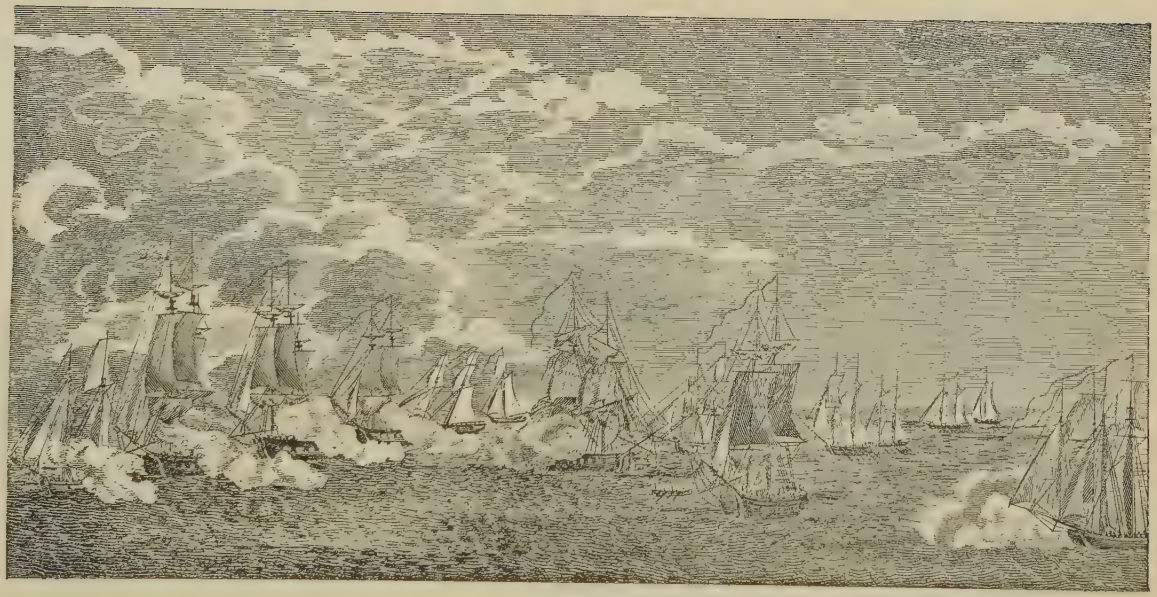
over the smooth water toward the Yankees. The battle was on! Hearty cheers came with the boom of that gun.

One must needs hear the thin quaver of "*Vive le*" this and "*Vive le*" that, of some Latin race to fully appreciate the power of an Anglo-Saxon cheer. It is significant of the power of the dominant race. But this was a family feud—it was Anglo-Saxon against Anglo-Saxon, and Perry's men heard the bold shout with smiles.

A moment later another ball, better aimed, crashed through the bulwarks of the Yankee flagship and some of the landsmen shivered. But Perry, tall, broad-shouldered, clear-eyed, faced them from the quarter deck and said "Steady boys, steady!"

And that was enough. Not a man flinched —not one man flinched on the deck of the *Lawrence* thereafter. Barclay was anxious to fight at long range, of course, but Perry was for a contest yard-arm to yard-arm. For ten minutes he held on his course without replying, but Stephen Champlin, who commanded the little *Scorpion*, was eager, and so let drive the first gun from the American side. As it happened, he also fired the last shot of the battle. At 11.35 A.M. the *Lawrence* was near enough to the *Detroit* to satisfy Perry, who opened fire with the long twelve on the bow; the *Caledonia*, that was astern of him, followed, while the *Niagara*, next in line, began to fire the long twelve also, though it was at very long range. Meantime the *Scorpion* and *Ariel* were doing their best, of course. The squadrons became fogged in with smoke—a smoke bank in which the darting flashes of the guns tore long rifts, and which the variable breeze swayed hither and yon as it swelled on the air.

In a few minutes the advantage which the British commander held in his concentration of



First View of Perry's Victory.

From an engraving of a drawing by Corné.

power over the scattered weight of the American metal—the gathering of his long guns on the large ships as well—became apparent. For the *Lawrence* was about as near to the *Hunter* and the *Queen Charlotte* as she was to the *Detroit*, and all three of these ships concentrated their fire upon her, while Perry made sail to close in on the *Detroit*. Even the *Lady Prevost* was able to reach out with her three long guns to tear the life out of the Yankee flagship.

How long could the American commander and his ship stand such pelting as that? For more than two hours. At noon his short guns were still unable to reach the *Detroit*, and he passed the word by trumpet down his line ordering all the vessels to close as rapidly as possible with the enemies to which they had been assigned. Every vessel got this order—Elliott on the *Niagara*, himself passed it—and every officer except Elliott obeyed it as well as the faint wind would permit.

But as the Americans closed in the three British ships—the *Detroit*, the *Hunter* and the *Queen Charlotte*—formed a crescent around one side and the stern of the American flagship, the *Hunter* taking a place where she could fairly rake the *Lawrence* aft and fore, and the *Lawrence* was supported only by the *Ariel* and the *Scorpion*. There were but seven long

guns on the three American vessels actually engaged, to thirty-two on the British vessels that were pelting the Yankee flagship. But in spite of such hopeless odds, Perry drove his ship into the thick of it until within half a musket shot of the *Detroit*, and there worked his guns, both long and short, for life.

"Perry's Sieg"—A German View of the Victory on Lake Erie.

From an old engraving.

As he stood on the quarter-deck, cheering his men, his little brother of thirteen stood beside him, wholly undismayed. The balls came crashing through the bulwarks, hurling unfortunates as mangled corpses across the deck, and driving the radiating splinters like jagged arrows into those who stood near by. The blood of wounded and dead splashed and flowed across the deck. The men pushed aside the limbs

and dismembered bodies of their shipmates when working the guns. The surgeon's assistants hurried to and fro, carrying the wounded below, while here and there a wounded man with bandage on head or shoulder came up to take again his station. The roar was incessant, the air a grimy cloud filled with the débris of splintered bulwarks and spars and shredded sails and hammocks, and of the down of cattails that the crew had gathered and stowed with the hammocks in the bulwarks.

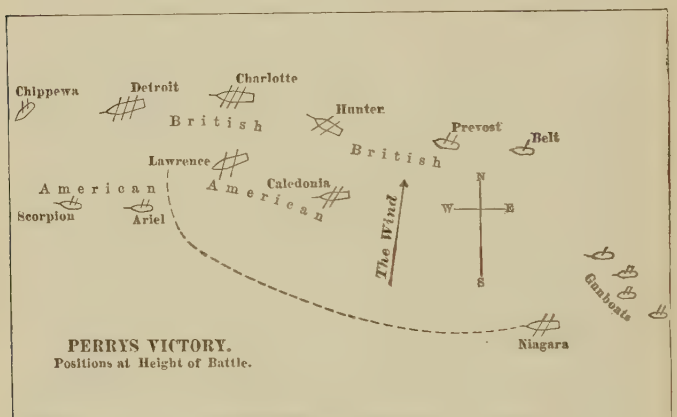
Lieutenant Yarnall, the executive officer, came aft, his face covered with blood and his nose swelled enormously because a splinter had been driven through it.

"All the officers in my division are cut down," he said. "Can I have others?"

He got others, and went forward. Two musket balls passed through the hat of the lad beside Perry, and then a splinter darted through his clothing, but still the lad did not flinch. And then, suddenly, he was knocked across the deck, and for once the face of Perry paled, for he supposed the boy was killed. As it happened, only a flying hammock had struck him, and he was soon on his feet. At this moment Perry turned once more to greet his first lieutenant. He had been wounded twice since going forward. He was fairly drenched in his own blood now, as well as that of others splashed

over him, and the fuzz of the cat-tails had gathered over his face in such masses as to almost conceal his features. He was after more assistants, but Perry could only say:

"I have no more officers to give you. You must try to make out by yourself."



The ships were probably in about this position when Perry, on finding the *Lawrence* wrecked and the *Niagara* coming up with a fresh breeze on the dotted line, determined to shift his flag. The whole fleet then drove away to the northwest, and Perry, with the *Niagara*, ran through the British line, tangled it up and cut it to pieces. He was aided by the other American vessels, who doubled up on the British line, the *Caledonia*, *Ariel*, and *Scorpion* gallantly following the *Niagara* through the line, while the others came up to windward of it. It was this movement that Ward pronounces "most masterly."

Going forward, Yarnall did make out by himself. He aimed the guns with his own hands and eyes thereafter. The time had come when Perry, too, like John Paul Jones of old, found it necessary to work the guns.

The last of Perry's assistants, the gallant Brooks, "remarkable for his personal beauty," was struck in the hip by a round shot and

knocked across the deck, where he begged, in his agony, that Perry would shoot him. But Perry turned away to fight the guns from which Brooks had been shot to death.

On the lower deck the scene was soon worse than on the gun-deck, for more than half the crew had been carried there. Surgeon Parsons could not work fast enough. The wounded were stretched out everywhere awaiting their turn. And because the ship was of such shoal draft the cannon balls of the enemy came crashing in among the wounded. Midshipman Laub, with a tourniquet on his arm, had started to go on deck again when a cannon-ball struck him in the chest and scattered his remains across the deck and splashing against the opposite side of the ship. An Indian, Charles Poughigh, was killed by another ball as he lay on deck after having had his leg cut off. The wounded, who were suffering the tortures of the surgeon's knife, were tortured anew by splinters ripped from the ship's side by the merciless shot, while a scared dog mingled its mournful howls with the crash and roar of battle and the shrieks and groans of the dying.

And there was Perry on the upper deck, loading, aiming and firing his guns, while his men dropped around him until at last not enough remained on the quarter-deck to work one gun. Coming to the hatchway Perry ask-

Second View of Perry's Victory.

From an engraving of a drawing by Cornè.

the surgeon to lend him a man to take a place at the gun. One went, and then another and another, and those who went first were cut down until not one remained below to help the surgeon. And then came Perry to the hatch with a last call for help.

"There is not another man left to go," said the surgeon.

"Are there none of the wounded, then, who can pull on a rope?" asked Perry.

And at that appeal three men crawled up the hatchway ladder on their hands and knees to grasp the ropes of the gun-tackles. These, aided by Purser Hambleton and Chaplain Breeze, rolled the muzzle of the gun out through the port, where Perry himself aimed and fired it. And that was the last gun fired from the *Lawrence*. The next broadside from the enemy left her with not a single gun that could be worked, and it severely wounded Purser Hambleton, who was beside Perry. At that Perry turned from the gun to look over the whole scene of battle. The *Lawrence* was a wreck. Her bowsprit and masts were almost wholly shot away and her hull was riddled. Out of a crew of more than a hundred men who had gone into the fight just fourteen remained unhurt. The remnants of twenty who had been killed outright were scattered about the deck. But the great blue burgee with "Don't give up

the ship" still fluttered aloft in the smoke, and Perry was the man for the motto.

As the firing ceased on the *Lawrence*, Elliott, who had kept the *Niagara* clear of the battle during those two long hours, made sail and, after ordering two of the near-by smaller vessels to new stations, headed with a happily freshened breeze for the right of British line. The eyes of Perry, turning from ship to ship, saw the *Niagara*, with full, round sails and quickening pace, coming. She was headed to pass more than a quarter of a mile from the disabled *Lawrence*, but Perry saw in her the means of retrieving what had been lost by the concentration of the enemy's fire upon his own ship. Stripping off the blue nankeen jacket he had worn all day he put on the epauletted coat of his rank and ordered a boat lowered with four men in it on the side of the *Lawrence* that was in the lee of the iron storm. The lad, Perry's brother, entered the boat with the men. At the same time the broad pennant of the flagship was hauled down, but the "gridiron flag" of America was left flying where it had been throughout the long conflict. Then, turning to his faithful lieutenant, he said:

"Yarnall, I leave the *Lawrence* in your charge with discretionary powers. You may hold out or surrender as your judgment and the circumstances shall dictate."

Perry Transferring his Colors.

After the painting by Powell.

Perry, although half surrounded by the enemy and within easy musket range, had determined to shift his flag to the *Niagara.*

As he turned to go a quarter-master hauled down the big blue burgee with the *Lawrence* words of inspiration upon it and gave it to the commander. Climbing then over the ship's side to the boat, Perry stood erect in the stern sheets, draped flag and pennant across his shoulders and, still standing erect, ordered the men to pull away for the *Niagara.*

Putting their oars against the ship's side they pushed clear, and then, catching the stroke, rowed out from behind the sheltering hulk. In a moment the fleet saw through the haze what Perry was trying to do—the Americans with aching anxiety for his fate—the British with a fierce determination to destroy him. A hell of sulphurous flame and smoke belched from the side of every British ship. Every gun of every sort in their squadron that could be brought to bear was aimed at the tiny craft. The round shot ploughed — the grape and canister and musket balls rained about the craft, filling the air with spray and spoondrift—but Perry, standing erect that he might inspire his squadron with his own courage, faced it all—faced it until his men mutinied to save his life and declared they would row no further unless he sat down. And when a round shot crashed, at the

last, through the side of the boat, he pulled off his coat, plugged the hole with it, and so reached the side of the *Niagara*.

The British had yelled as they fired; now the cheers of the Americans rose triumphantly above the roar of battle. The shifting of his flag to the *Niagara* was the decisive movement of the battle. Perry saw his opportunity, was quick to take advantage of it, and victory was at hand.

"How goes the day?" asked Lieutenant Elliott as Perry reached the *Niagara's* deck. He had been too far away to see for himself.

"Bad enough," replied Perry. "Why are the gun-boats so far astern?"

"I'll bring them up," said Elliott.

"Do so," said Perry, and jumping into the boat Perry had left, Elliott was rowed away to the lagging gun-boats. As Elliott shoved clear, Perry's pennant and the great blue burgee fluttered aloft, with signals for closing in on the enemy. The flags were greeted with cheers from every American ship but one. Over on the abandoned *Lawrence*, Yarnall, having not one gun that he could fire, hauled down his flag to save life. A shout arose from the nearby *Detroit*. The wounded on the lower deck heard the ominous sound. They asked the cause, and when told that the flag was coming down forgot all else in their patriotism and cried:

"Sink the ship! Sink the ship!"

But no such despair was felt in any other American ship. On the others the crews, with dancing muscles, sprang to make sail or knelt with clear eyes to look through the sights of the guns they were aiming anew at the British ships. Putting up his helm, Perry squared away and drove his ship through the British squadron, now bunched so that he had the *Lady Prevost* and the *Chippewa* on the left and the *Detroit*, the *Queen Charlotte*, and the *Hunter* on his right, and all of them but a few yards away as he passed. Into these he fired broadsides, double-shotted, as each came in bearing of the guns. The crew of the *Lady Prevost* fled below, leaving only their captain, Lieutenant Buchan, standing on the quarter-deck, leaning his wounded face on his hands, and staring with insane eyes upon the scene. The effect of the fire on the others was but little less disastrous. The *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*, in trying to swing around to meet the Yankee, fouled each other, and Perry, ranging ahead, rounded to and raked them both. Every other American ship had by this time closed in, and, like a fighter who gets his second wind, they were pounding the enemy. It was more than flesh and blood—even the flesh and blood of an Anglo-Saxon—could stand, and eight minutes after Perry had dashed through the British line

a man appeared at the rail of the British flagship, and waved a white handkerchief tied to a boarding-pike in token of surrender.

That was on September 10, 1813. Until another war came, the people of Northwestern Ohio gathered in groups of hundreds and thousands every year, on the 10th of September, on the islands of Put-in Bay and wherever lakeside groves were found. They came dressed in holiday attire. They brought baskets full of the best provisions that a bountiful region afforded. They erected long tables in the shade and spread their good things thereon. They built an elevated platform fit for speakers, and those who had voices to sing stood up on the platform around one sweet-faced girl dressed as Columbia, and sang the old songs of Perry's victory—sang songs that told how

> He pulled off his coat
> And he plugged up the boat
> And away he went sailing through fire and smoke.

Sang

> As lifts the smoke what tongue can fitly tell
> The transports which those manly bosoms swell,
> When Britain's ensign down the reeling mast
> Sinks to proclaim the desperate struggle past!
> Electric cheers along the shattered fleet,
> With rapturous hail, her youthful hero greet;
> Meek in his triumph, as in danger calm,
> With reverent hands he takes the victor's palm;
> His wreath of conquest on Faith's altar lays,
> To his brave comrades yields the meed of praise.

"We have met the Enemy and they are Ours."

From the "Naval Monument."

And when they had sung their songs, one who could talk stood up to tell anew the story of this, the first battle in which the Americans had fought with a squadron, and the first battle in the history of the world when the commander of a British squadron had been compelled to haul down his flag. It was a story that young and old heard with rapt and silent interest, until at its close they rose and with the thrill of triumph in their veins, shouted to the immortal words in which Perry announced his victory :

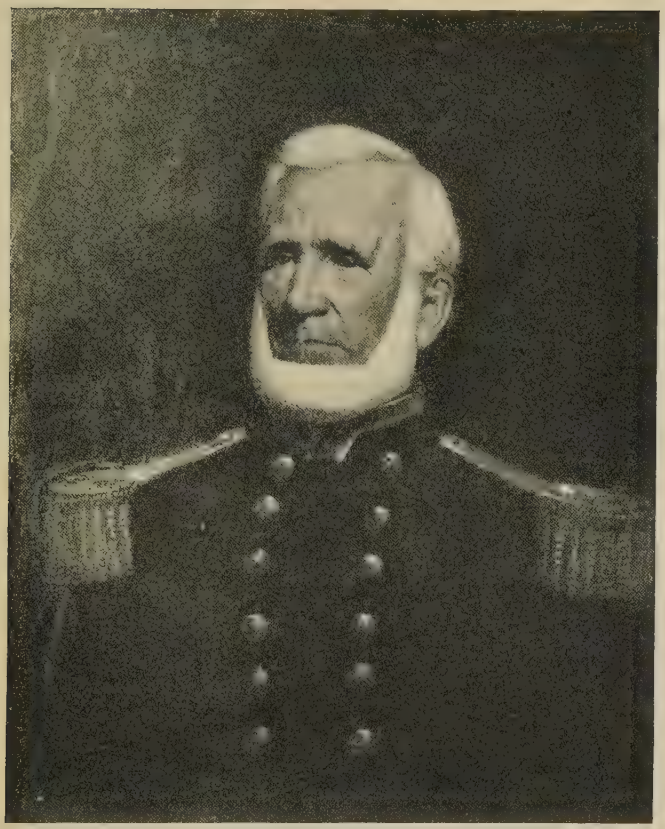
" We have met the enemy and they are ours ; two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop."

CHAPTER XIV

INCIDENTS OF THE BATTLE ON LAKE ERIE

TWO OF THE ENEMY'S VESSELS THAT TRIED TO GET AWAY — A YANKEE SAILOR'S REASON FOR WANTING ONE MORE SHOT — WHEN PERRY RETURNED TO THE *LAWRENCE* — THE DEAD AND WOUNDED — EFFECT OF THE VICTORY ON THE PEOPLE — HONORS TO THE VICTORS — THE CASE OF LIEUTENANT ELLIOTT — ULTIMATE FATE OF SOME OF THE SHIPS.

ALTHOUGH victory was declared when, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of September 10, 1813, Captain Barclay of the British squadron ordered a white flag displayed, the contest was not wholly ended, nor is the story of it yet complete. The British schooner *Chippewa* and the sloop *Little Belt* had been shunted off to the westward by the exigencies of battle, and their commanders, taking advantage of the veiling cloud of smoke, made sail in the hope of escaping back to the Detroit River. Stephen Champlin, who commanded the *Scorpion*, and Thomas Holdup, in command of the *Trippe*, went in chase and captured them, although it was 10 o'clock at night before Champlin got



Stephen Champlin.

From a painting at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

back with the *Little Belt* in tow. And thus it happened that Champlin fired the last shot of the battle.

One incident, occurring on the *Somers*, remains to be told. It was on this vessel that

Elliott came into the battle the second time, and he says:

"I was directing the forward gun — the schooner having but two—and after the enemy had struck ordered to cease firing, but the man at the after gun having lost his fire by the intervening rigging, was in the act of firing again. I struck him with the flat of my sword, saying:

"'You scoundrel, do you mean to fire at him after he has struck?'

"'Just this once more, Captain Elliott,' said he.

"'What do you want to fire for?'

"'I want a little satisfaction just for myself. I was pressed nine times in their service.'"

Meantime Perry prepared to receive the officers who were to come, and in the usual form to offer their swords to him. Standing on the deck of the *Niagara* as the news of the surrender travelled from one American ship to another, and listening to the cheers with which the words were greeted, Perry heard, last of all, a faint response from the few men still remaining on the battered *Lawrence*, from which the fleet had been slowly drifting. Their cry came to him as an appeal to return to her, and return he did, after informing the defeated officers that they would be received there. Bringing the fleet to anchor, Perry entered a boat and was carried to her side, and those of her crew

who were able to do so gathered at the gangway to receive him—gathered with uncovered heads and in silence.

"It was a time of conflicting emotions when he stepped upon deck," wrote Surgeon Parsons. "The battle was won, and he was safe, but the deck was slippery with blood, and strewn with the bodies of twenty officers and men, seven of whom had sat at a table with us at our last meal, and the ship resounded everywhere with the groans of the wounded. Those of us who were spared and able to walk met him at the gangway to welcome him on board, but the salutation was a silent one on both sides; not a word could find utterance.

"And then came the officers of the British squadron, one from each vessel. They were obliged to walk around dismounted guns and pick their way over the dead to reach the victorious commander. But they had come from scenes no less trying on their own decks, for he who came from the *Detroit* had seen a pet bear lapping the blood of those who had but a brief time before been fondling it. One after another they presented their swords, while Perry in a low and kindly voice declined to receive them, and asked about the dead and wounded they had left behind. He was particularly solicitous in his questions about Captain Barclay, for Barclay had in Europe suffered the loss of

an arm, and had been otherwise mutilated in fighting the French, and now had been badly wounded again—so badly that he lost the other arm."

Until 9 o'clock at night the Americans were busy securing the prisoners, burying the dead, and making repairs on the rigging of the ships, but at that hour the sails were once more spread to the breeze, and victor and vanquished sailed away to anchor in beautiful Put-in Bay Harbor.

Here on the 12th the officers who had fallen were buried on South Bass Island, three Americans and three Englishmen, side by side and with equal honors, as they had shown equal manly qualities.

The number of dead among the Americans was twenty-seven (of whom twenty-two were killed on the *Lawrence*), the wounded, ninety-six. The British reported a loss of forty-one killed and ninety-four wounded. The *Lawrence*, as told, was wellnigh a wreck above the water-line; the *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte* were so much cut up in masts and rigging that, in a blow two days later, the masts went over the rails in spite of preventers, although both were at anchor in Put-in Bay.

On boarding the *Detroit* the Americans found two Indians hiding in the hold. They had been stationed aloft as sharpshooters, but

when the American great guns were brought to bear they had slid down the rigging in terror. On being brought to the deck they expressed astonishment because they were not tortured.

The unhurt prisoners were all placed on the *Porcupine*, and there fed and served with an allowance of grog as soon as possible. The wounded were put on the *Lawrence* and sent to Erie under the care of Yarnall, save that the officers were kept with Perry.

Perry's despatch to General Harrison, it is worth telling, was written with a pencil on the back of an old letter. Perry used his cap in lieu of a table. When written, the despatch was entrusted to Midshipman Dulany Forest. Forest had been wounded in a curious fashion. A grape-shot struck the side of a port, glanced and struck a mast, and glancing again, struck down Forest as he stood beside Perry. Perry stooped and raised him up. He was unconscious for a moment, but quickly recovered, and getting on his feet, pulled the projectile from the inside of his clothing, through which it had penetrated, and put it in his pocket, saying :

"I guess this is mine."

Perry's letter to the Secretary of the Navy is worth quoting, for it was written when "a religious awe seemed to come over him at his

wonderful preservation in the midst of great and long-continued danger."

It read :

"It has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake. The British squadron, consisting of two ships, two brigs, a schooner and a sloop, have this moment surrendered to the force under my command, after a sharp conflict."

It was characteristic of the man to say "surrendered to the force under my command," rather than to say "surrendered to me." And it is recorded that when he had given the needed orders for the care of the prisoners and the fleet, the reaction that followed the prolonged excitement was so great that, utterly weary, he stretched himself among his dead comrades on the deck of his ship, and with his sword still in hand, went fast to sleep.

The news of the victory spread over the nation with marvellous rapidity. The roar of the guns, conveyed by the water, was heard even at Erie. People at Cleveland gathered on the water-front, and when the last guns were fired cheered the name of Perry, because those last reports were from the heaviest guns, and they knew that the heaviest guns were on the American ships.

But while these men cheered, there were

others who, living in the wild region about the head of the lake, and seeing for themselves where victory lay, instead of cheering, gathered their wives and little ones around them and out of full hearts gave thanks to Almighty God for his goodness. And they had good reason for so doing, for the capture of the enemy's fleet meant more to them than the taking of ships. It meant that the inhuman Proctor, who, at the head of 5,000 mixed troops and Indians, was awaiting the news at Malden, would be barred from his intended incursion into Ohio —Proctor, who had looked on unmoved while the Indians, under Tecumseh, slaughtered the prisoners after the fall of Fort Miami. All the day of the battle on Lake Erie "women with terrified children, and decrepit old men, sat listening with the deepest anxiety, for they knew not but with the setting sun they would be compelled to flee to the interior to escape the fangs of the red blood-hounds who were ready to be let loose upon helpless innocency by the approved servants of a government that boasted of its civilization and Christianity."

Perry had saved these from the terrors of the scalping-knife and the stake. His victory "led to the destruction of the Indian Confederacy and wiped out the stigma of the surrender at Detroit, thirteen months before. When Proctor heard the news he fled for his life, and was

roundly denounced to his face for his cowardice by the brave and disgusted Tecumseh."

Little less heartfelt were the rejoicings of the whole nation over this battle. "Illuminations,

The Medal Awarded to Oliver H. Perry after his Victory on Lake Erie.

bonfires, salvos of artillery, public dinners, orations, and songs were the visible indications of the popular satisfaction, and it will not be forgotten that the most conspicuous feature of every illumination was a transparency that read: "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

The Congress thanked Perry, and his men through him; voted gold medals to him and Elliott, silver medals to all other commissioned officers, swords to midshipmen and sailing-masters, and three months' pay all around. Perry was promoted from the rank of master commandant to that of captain, his new commission bearing the date of the battle. State leg-

islatures and city councils expressed their patriotic rejoicings in the usual fashion, Pennsylvania leading the way. There are portraits and statues a-plenty of the hero, and while the art

JESSE D. ELLIOTT. NIL ACTUM REPUTANS SI QUID SUPERESSET AGENDUM.
FURST. F.
VIAM INVENIT VIRTUS AUT FACIT
INTER CLASS. AMERI. ET BRIT. DIE X. SEP. MDCCCXIII.
FURST. F.

Medal Awarded to Jesse D. Elliott.

of printing preserves the story of his deeds, his fame will remain untarnished among his patriotic countrymen.

The reader who understands somewhat of the handling of sailing-ships will observe that the *Niagara* did not take the prominent part in the battle which her size and power warranted until after she was boarded by Perry. Because of this Elliott has been accused of acting the part of the jealous Frenchman who might have helped instead of hurting John Paul Jones in the *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* fight. The officers under Perry were furious against him. In the prolonged controversy that followed, Elliott's

friends, to defend him, declared that the order to keep the *Niagara* half a cable length astern of the *Caledonia* was imperative and was not rescinded; and that Perry had, in his enthusiastic handling of his own ship, forgotten to handle the whole squadron. Elliott, they said, was anxiously awaiting orders from Perry during all the battle, and meantime worked his long guns until all the projectiles were exhausted.

Elliott himself says in a pamphlet that he issued in 1844:

"Great stress has been laid on my not leaving my station in the line at the battle of Lake Erie at an earlier moment; and in doing so why I did not pass between the *Lawrence* and the enemy. I'll tell you. Where two fleets are about to engage in battle, a knowledge of naval tactics and evolutions must be resorted to. The line once formed, no captain has a right to change without authority or a signal from the commanding vessel."

However, that Elliott erred in not obeying the order that he himself helped to pass, cannot now be questioned by a sailorman, for the rule of the sea is to obey the last order. But it is hard to believe on the face of the facts that Elliott acted the part of a Landais, and when it is recalled that Perry gave him hearty praise even after the other officers began to murmur aloud, it is reasonably certain that he had at the

very worst earned a silver medal, and no one should grudge him the gold one he received.

The English comments on this battle declared that it was a Canadian—a local defeat, and not a defeat of the "Royal Navy." They sneered at the courage, as well as the capacity, of the Colonists. Allen's history in the latest edition declares that Perry had six hundred picked men. The slur on the Canadians is no affair of ours, of course, but one who knows the manly qualities of our neighbors at the North, cannot let it pass.

It may be of interest to note that the captured ships were valued at $225,000. Of this, Perry and Elliott got $7,140 each, while $5,000 was voted by Congress to Perry in addition. The captains of gun-boats and other officers got $2,295 each; midshipmen, $811 each; petty officers, $447, and the men before the mast, $209 each.

At the end of the open-water season the ships of the squadron rendezvoused at Erie, and eventually, after the war, the *Lawrence*, the *Detroit*, and the *Queen Charlotte* were sunk in Little Bay in the east end of Presqu' Isle at Erie, as worthless. The *Niagara* followed to the same Davy-Jones locker. Then the *Queen Charlotte* and *Detroit* were bought and raised, and used for a time as merchantmen. The end of the *Detroit* came at last when some hotel-

keepers at Niagara Falls bought her, put a live bear and some other animals on her, to make a show for gaping fools, and sent her over the falls.

The guns from the fleet when last fired served a historical purpose. When the Erie Canal was opened they were stretched along its route at such intervals that the report of one, if fired, could be heard at the next. And so, when the first boat was ready to make its triumphant passage of the great waterway, these guns were fired one after another to telegraph the news ahead, and so it happened that in just two hours from the time when she left Buffalo it was known in New York that she had started.

Said Washington Irving in writing of Perry's victory soon after the event:

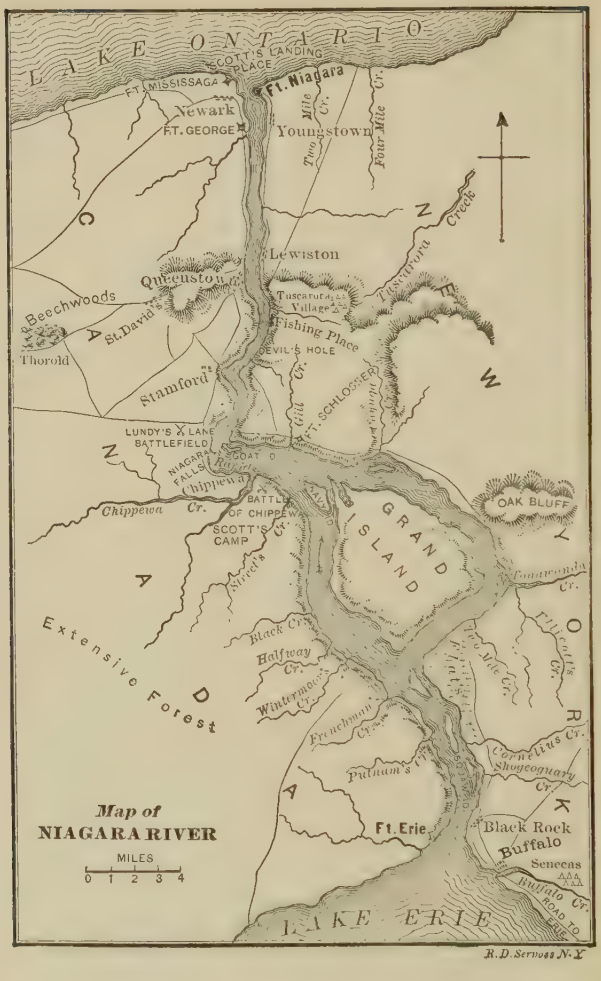
"In future times, when the shores of Erie shall hum with busy population; when towns and cities shall brighten where now extend the dark and tangled forests; when ports shall spread their arms, and lofty barks shall ride where now the canoe is fastened to the stake; when the present age shall have grown into venerable antiquity, and the mists of fable begin to gather around its history, then will the inhabitants look back to this battle as one of the romantic achievements of the days of yore. It will stand first on the page of their local legends, and in the marvellous tales of the borders."

CHAPTER XV

THE WAR ON LAKE ONTARIO

THE CAPTURE OF YORK (TORONTO) BY THE AMERICANS—A VICTORY AT THE MOUTH OF THE NIAGARA RIVER—BRITISH ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK ON SACKETT'S HARBOR—TALES OF THE PRUDENCE OF SIR JAMES YEO AND COMMODORE CHAUNCEY—THE AMERICANS DID SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN THE BRITISH, BUT MISSED A GREAT OPPORTUNITY—SMALL AFFAIRS ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN DURING THE SUMMER OF 1813.

While Perry was laboring at Erie to get his squadron ready, the Americans on Lake Ontario, as has been intimated in what was said about the capture of Fort George, were by no means idle. Plans were laid for an assault on Toronto—then called York—to be followed by the attack on Fort George at the mouth of Niagara River, and after that, Kingston, the British naval station across from Sackett's Harbor, was to be assaulted. A force of 8,300 men was collected for this purpose at Sackett's Harbor in the spring of 1813, of whom 1,300 were sailors from the squadron of Commodore Chauncey. The soldiers were



under General Dearborn, assisted by General Zebulon M. Pike. On April 22, 1813, 1,700 soldiers were embarked on the fourteen ships

under Chauncey, the flag-ship being the *Madison*, commanded by Lieutenant Elliott, who was afterward to go to aid Perry.

The squadron sailed on the 25th, and after a stormy, sea-sick passage, appeared off Toronto on the 27th, and the troops were landed under command of Pike, Dearborn being too sick to go ashore. Pike was a famous explorer in his day, and the famous Peak of Colorado perpetuates his memory. As the boats were going ashore he observed that the leaders were hesitating under fire from the British, and jumping into a boat, he was quickly at the head of the procession and effected a landing. The chief work of the navy here was to bombard the works within reach, and the woods where a lot of Indians were in cover, but it is worth telling that, as the American troops were advancing, Pike ordered a bugler to sound a charge, and that the wild notes of this instrument so terrified the red men that they fled with a horrified yell in dismay—leaving the Yankees to advance to the tune of "Yankee Doodle" unmolested by them. And to this must be added the fact that a magazine in a block-house that the enemy despaired of holding was blown up, and fifty-two Americans were killed and one hundred and eighty wounded. As it happened, forty of the British also lost their lives by the explosion. Pike

was among the mortally wounded, but he had the satisfaction of dying with the flag of the enemy under his head. A large quantity of naval and military stores were taken here, besides two hundred and ninety prisoners.

It is a pleasure to add that in spite of the antagonisms that grew out of a war which the Americans were compelled to wage to protect

The Death of General Pike.
From an old wood-cut.

their seamen on the high seas, there is no city in the British domain where Yankees are more cordially received than at Toronto.

From Toronto the American squadron went to the head of the lake, arriving on May 11th. Here the attack on Fort George, just inside the mouth of Niagara River, was planned, and on the morning of May 27, 1813, the troops embarked before daylight to make the assault.

The Niagara River and Scenes from the War of 1812.

From an engraving in Hinton's History of the United States.

It is recorded that a heavy fog prevailed until after sunrise, when it suddenly cleared away, revealing the squadron with flat-boats and row-boats, covered with men, afloat on the dimpling waters. A fresh breeze enabled the vessels to take their designated places with ease. Three were stationed to care for a battery on the point. Two more were placed to attack a fort near the landing-place at Two Mile Creek, and three more were anchored close in at the landing to cover the troops. The battery at the landing was bombarded so skilfully that it was silenced, and then the boats loaded with troops, under the management of Perry, quickly reached the shore, when the troops, led by Winfield Scott, who lived to become the head of the regular army, made an effectual landing. But that was only a beginning. Three times the gallant Scott was repulsed by the superior numbers of the enemy that met him as he charged up the slope before him, but after twenty minutes of hard fighting, during which the ships raked the enemy with their great guns, the enemy broke and fled. Then the Americans dashed at Fort George itself. The enemy succeeded in blowing up one of their magazines, but the Americans extinguished the burning trains leading to two smaller ones, and Scott, with his own hands, hauled down the British flag.

Isaac Chauncey.

From an engraving by Edwin of the portrait by Wood.

But while Chauncey was at the head of the lake, the British at Kingston learned that Sackett's Harbor had been left with only a small force to defend it, and, to quote a British account of what they did in consequence, "Sir George Prevost now allowed himself to be persuaded to embark seven hundred and fifty troops on board the squadron for the

purpose of making an attack on Sackett's Harbor ; but to mar the successful issue of the plan, he resolved to head the troops himself."

On May 27th, the day when the Americans were taking Fort George at the head of the lake, the British squadron with a fair wind sailed across to Sackett's Harbor, arriving at noon, when the fleet hove to and prepared to send the troops on shore. Then "Sir George hesitated, looked at the place, mistook trees for troops and block-houses for batteries, and ordered the expedition to put back."

Meantime, however, some Indians had made a dash ashore with canoes and captured a squad of American soldiers, whom they carried off to the British squadron. So Sir George tried again, and on the 29th made a landing. The Americans were outnumbered and at first fled. A new ship called the *General Pike*, a ship called the *Duke of Gloucester*, captured at Toronto, and a barrack containing all the stores captured at the same time, were fired. Then the Americans came back to fight, "the British retired to their vessels, and the Americans, as soon as they could credit their senses, hastened to stop the conflagration." The *Duke of Gloucester* and the stores, however, were burned. The above quotations are from "Military Occurrences between Great Britain and the United States."

CAPTN. SIR JAMES LUCAS YEO. KNT.

Soon after his victory at Fort George, Chauncey returned to Sackett's Harbor. In the meantime Captain Sir James L. Yeo had been placed in command of the British naval forces on Lake Ontario. Yeo, in the frigate *Southampton*, had captured the little American twelve-gun brig *Vixen* in the West Indies, on November 22, 1812, but had lost both his ship and his prize by running ashore on Concepcion Island in the Bahama group. He had also sent a challenge to Captain Porter of the *Essex*, as follows :

"Sir James Yeo presents his compliments to Captain Porter, of the American frigate *Essex*, and would be glad to have a *tête-à-tête*, anywhere between the capes of Delaware and Havana, where he would have the pleasure to break his sword over his damned head and put him down forward in irons."

It was Sir James who brought Sir George Prevost to Sackett's Harbor and carried him back again. Before Chauncey got back to Sackett's Harbor, Sir James was able to add a new ship, the *Wolfe*, a twenty-four-gun sloop-of-war, to his squadron, and this made his force afloat superior to that of the Americans. Following the failure at Sackett's Harbor he went cruising, captured two American supply-schooners, and landed at Sodus Point, where he got six hundred barrels of flour. This was in

June. During that month the Americans captured a British supply-schooner, and thereafter nothing was done until near the end of July.

On July 21st the new American twenty-eight-gun ship *Pike* was ready to sail, and a schooner, the *Sylph*, had also been added to the squadron at Sackett's Harbor. With his whole force, Commodore Chauncey sailed to the Niagara River, took on Scott and some regulars, and made another assault on Toronto, where they destroyed eleven transports, burned the barracks and carried off five cannon, a lot of flour, and some ammunition. Returning to Niagara, Lieutenant Elliott and a hundred men were sent to join Perry. This was done on August 3d. On August 7, 1813, while the Americans lay at anchor at Niagara, Yeo's squadron appeared. The American squadron at this time numbered thirteen vessels, of which three were built for men-of-war and had bulwarks to protect the men at the guns from the grape-shot and musketry of the enemy. The rest were schooners without bulwarks—merchant-schooners that had had guns mounted on them. The Americans had 965 men on board, and their guns threw 1,390 pounds of metal at a broadside, of which long guns threw 800 pounds.

Yeo had only six vessels, but these were all

men-of-war and had high, thick bulwarks. They were manned by not less than seven hundred and seventy men, and their guns threw 1,374 pounds of metal, all but one hundred and eighty being from short guns. Obviously at long range in fine weather the Americans would have the advantage of force, while at short range all but three of the Yankee vessels would be wellnigh useless; and in rough weather the Yankee schooners would be wholly useless.

On the 7th the squadrons jockeyed for place. At 1 o'clock next morning a squall overturned the two American schooners *Hamilton* and *Scourge* because their big guns made them top-heavy. This reduced the American weight of metal thrown to one hundred and forty-four pounds less than the British. For two days more the two commanders jockeyed for place, and it is obvious that if either had had the spirit of Perry when he said "To windward or to leeward they shall fight to-day," the fight would have taken place. All the next day still (August 10, 1813) the two squadrons filled and backed, but at 7 o'clock at night they got together, the British to windward in a single column, the Yankees in the lee in two columns, the big ships being in the lee line. Chauncey hoped that Yeo would try to close on the schooners, and that they could then slip

through between the big ones and beat around to rake the enemy when engaged with the regular American men-of-war.

At 11 o'clock the American schooners opened fire at long range. Fifteen minutes later the British knight replied and "the action became general and harmless."

At 11.30 all the American schooners but the *Growler* and *Julia* squared away and passed to the lee of the big Americans. The two tacked up ahead of the British squadron. But the British did not come down. On the contrary, Yeo tacked after the two schooners and got them in spite of a brilliant dash that they made to run through his line. When too late, Chauncey tried to beat up to help his two schooners, but he couldn't beat fast enough to overtake Sir James Yeo. The next day the two squadrons were in sight of each other, the British knight being to windward, but he did not go hunting Yankee war-ships down wind nor did Chauncey crowd sail to beat up. That night the wind grew so heavy that two of the schooners had run to shelter and Chauncey with his seven remaining vessels went to Sackett's Harbor, reprovisioned his vessels and came back again. The British had had the best of it, but Chauncey was by no means crushed.

From August 13th until September 10th the

two bold commodores chased the wind, each very much surprised and disgusted that the other kept out of the way "though so much superior in force."

On the day after Perry's victory the two squadrons did have a brush at long range in a light breeze. It was a good day for the Yankee schooners, and Sir James, by his own confession, sailed away after a few shots had been fired. The Americans lost nothing. The British lost four killed and seven wounded. Then on the 28th there was another fight. It was on a very good day for a battle. The Americans made the attack and came down handsomely on the enemy, who received them warmly. The three leading American vessels were the new ship *Pike* and the *Tompkins* and *Asp*, the last being in tow of the *Pike*. The *Madison* and the *Sylph* had each a little schooner in tow and so were kept so far astern that they never got into the battle. The three leaders fired away bravely, the *Pike* taking the *Wolfe*, Yeo's flag-ship, as her special target. The Yankee *Tompkins* lost her foremast but the *Pike* shot away the maintop-mast and mainyard of the *Wolfe* and killed so many men that Sir James squared away and made all sail to escape from the three Yankee ships, the remainder of the American fleet never getting within range. The Americans lost five

in killed and wounded. The British did not publish the reports of their losses.

Having chased the British into Burlington Bay, Commodore Chauncey missed the one great opportunity of his lifetime. Burlington Bay was undefended. Had he sailed boldly in after the demoralized British, there was every hope of a triumph as complete as that of Perry on Lake Erie. But Chauncey did not sail in. He said he was afraid it would come on to blow and he would be caught on a lee shore. That he was afraid of something is undisputed. Chauncey, however, did now have command of the lake and a few days later retook the *Julia* and the *Growler* that Yeo had captured at the head of the lake, and took also the British schooners *Mary*, *Drummond*, and *Lady Gore*. These five were transporting troops along the lake-shore. Yeo got his war-ships into Kingston and Chauncey kept them there.

On the whole, the British had undisputed control of Lake Ontario during forty-eight days. There was a sort of a contest for the control lasting sixty-nine days, and the Americans held undisputed control for one hundred and seven days of the open season of 1813. The British captured the two schooners *Growler* and *Julia*. The Americans retook these, captured a ten-gun brig at Toronto (the *Gloucester*), and burned a twenty-four-gun ship almost com-

pleted. They also destroyed army and navy supplies and other public property far in excess of the damage the British inflicted upon the Americans.

There was also a small fight on Lake Champlain during the summer of 1813. The American naval force there was under Lieutenant

Buffalo, N. Y., Burned by the British, December 30, 1813.
From an old wood-cut.

Thomas Macdonough, whose name first appears in American history in the story of the Tripolitan war. Macdonough had two small sloops called the *Growler* and the *Eagle*. On June 3d he sent them, under Lieutenant Smith, to the north end of the lake after three British gunboats. The gun-boats fled down the Sorel River, the outlet of the lake. Smith bravely, but foolishly, followed them, and so got into a trap, for

a strong British land force came to help the gun-boats, and pelted the American decks with musketry. The Americans had only carronades, while the gun-boats had long twenty-fours. So the British kept out of range of the Yankee short guns and kept up a fire from the long twenty-fours until the *Eagle* had a plank knocked off under water, when she sank instantly. The *Growler* had her main boom and forestay shot away, and grounded. The British captured both and obtained for a time the mastery of that lake. The Americans in this fight had one man killed and nineteen wounded, who, with ninety-two unhurt men, fell into the British hands.

On July 31st Colonel J. Murray, with 1,000 British troops, aided by the captured sloops and the three gun-boats, assaulted Plattsburg and marched thence to Saranac. All the public stores at both places were burned and then Murray retreated.

How Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough not only prevented any further incursions of that kind, but retrieved all the losses he had sustained and shifted the account to the other side—how he fought and whipped a superior force of the enemy, while a clarion-voiced rooster flapped its wings and crowed for victory in the shot-frayed rigging—will be told in the next volume.

CHAPTER XVI

LOSS OF THE LITTLE SLOOP *ARGUS*

SHE WAS CAPTURED BY THE *PELICAN*, A VESSEL THAT WAS OF SLIGHTLY SUPERIOR FORCE—A CLEAN VICTORY FOR THE BRITISH, BUT ONE THAT IN NO WAY DISHEARTENS THE FIERCEST OF THE AMERICAN PATRIOTS—ILL-LUCK OF "THE WAGGON."

THE story of the American Navy during the first eighteen months of the War of 1812 is by no means completed. There were battles which, in spite of the fact that only small forces were involved, were really no less significant in demonstrating the character of the sea-power of the new American nation than were the great victories already described. There was at least one defeat that was in one way most significant. And there were other events that were matters of consideration then and are now.

For instance there was the act of the Congress on January 2, 1813, when it was ordered that the Navy be increased by four ships-of-the-line (rating at seventy-four guns), six frigates to rate with the *Constitution*, and six sloops

to rate with the *Hornet*, that eventually thrashed the *Peacock* so effectually. Tremendous, comparatively speaking, as was this addition to the naval strength of the nation, the real significance of the act was found in the change of spirit in the national administration and legislature. For it was but five months to the day since Captain Hull had sailed from Boston *contrary to orders* that were en route—had sailed on the cruise that ended with the destruction of the boastful *Guerrière*. It was on August 2, 1812, that the *Constitution* sailed, and at that time the Administration at Washington fully believed that to allow an American frigate to go to sea was to insure that she would be captured and added to the British Navy, and so, like the pusillanimous French Government of the day, it preferred seeing the ships rot to taking the chances of battle. But the magnificent courage and skill of the American naval seaman, in spite of the pusillanimity of the politicians in power—in spite of the fact that they received but half-hearted support from the nation as a whole — had, in five months, shot under water the porcupine policy in naval affairs and replaced the eagle on the American coat-of-arms. And there the eagle remains to this day, albeit he lowers his head with a tinge of shame when he looks for the gridiron flag among the merchant fleets of the world.

As the reader will remember, the *United States* sailed on the cruise during which she captured the *Macedonian* with Commodore John Rodgers of the *President*, the *Congress* and the *Argus* being also of the squadron. The *President* proved unlucky on that voyage, for she got nothing. Her hard luck continued in the cruise that followed. In company with the *Congress*, Captain John Smith, the *President* sailed from Boston on April 30, 1813. Two days later the little British sloop-of-war *Curlew*, Captain Michael Head, was seen, but after a protracted chase the *Curlew* escaped. A little later the two frigates separated and the *Congress* cruised in the South Atlantic all the summer and part of the fall, and finally returned to Portsmouth, New Haven, having been at sea two hundred and nineteen days and taken four merchant-ships. The *President* cruised first on the Grand Banks, then near the Azores, and from there sailed to the north and around the Shetland Islands to the port of Bergen, where she stopped for supplies. Sailing thence she eventually got back to the Nantucket Shoals on September 23d. There she fell in with the British schooner *Highflyer*, and by posing as a British frigate and sending a lieutenant dressed in a British uniform on board of her, succeeded in getting the book of private signals and instructions.

Meantime, while off North Cape in company with the American privateer *Scourge*, Rodgers was chased by two British ships. He said in his journal that the two were "a line-of-battle ship and a frigate." The British say that the two were the thirty-two-gun frigate *Alexandria* (she carried long twelves for her main battery) and the sloop *Spitfire*, of about twenty guns. There seems to be no reason for doubting that Rodgers did make the mistake attributed to him. Others made mistakes like that, as will appear farther on.

The book captured from the *Highflyer* proved valuable in a variety of ways, but chiefly because it gave the numbers and stations of British war-ships on the American coast, and so enabled American commanders to avoid the British squadrons. A private circular from the British Admiralty ordered the captains of all British war-ships to make special efforts to capture the *President*.

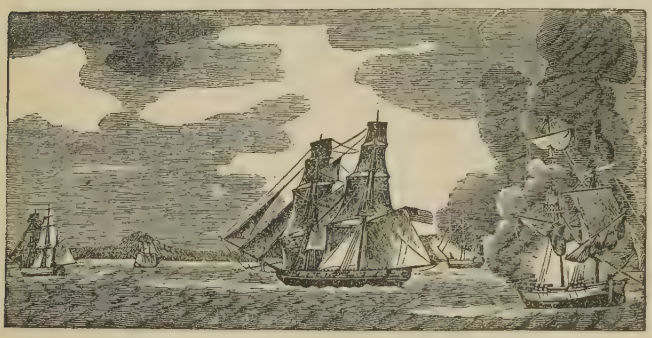
Just why the British Navy should have felt such great animosity toward this ship is hard to understand in this day. Certainly she was not the most formidable of the American ships. In fact she had been so overloaded with guns that she proved a poor sailer (witness the escape of the *Belvidera* and the *Curlew*), and eventually she was hogged so that she was captured (as will be told farther on) in a race where

the *Constitution* would have escaped easily. Nevertheless, the Admiralty, as said, were especially anxious to capture her, and the animosity of the British nation against her was so great that even thirty years after the war was over, the "British Naval Chronicle" still spoke of her as "the waggon"—a term, by the way, that suggests the naval tar's contempt for hay-makers, and recalls the deeds of the Yankee hay-makers when afloat in the war of the Revolution.

Quite different was the luck of the sloop *Argus*, the smallest of the ships that sailed with Rodgers in that first Yankee squadron cruise of the War of 1812. When she returned from that cruise, William H. Allen, who had gained fame for his part in the capture of the *Macedonian*, was placed in command of her. The reader will remember that it was Allen who fired on the *Leopard* when she attacked the *Chesapeake* in time of peace to re-impress some American seamen, carrying a coal from the galley fire in his naked hand for the purpose for lack of matches. With this incident in mind to indicate his character, the uninformed reader will be prepared for the story of his fate which follows.

The sailing orders which Allen, who now had the rank of master-commandant, received, directed him to carry to France Mr. William

H. Crawford, the newly appointed American Minister to that nation. The *Argus* sailed on this errand from New York on June 18, 1813, and reached L'Orient twenty-three days later. Having refitted his ship, Captain Allen emulated the famous deeds of John Paul Jones and other Revolutionary heroes by sailing boldly into the English Channel and thence around



The *Argus* Burning British Vessels.
From an old wood-cut.

Land's End into the Irish Sea. It was a short but a brilliant cruise. The *Argus* sailed on July 14, 1813. Ship after ship was taken, some of them right under the cliffs of the British coast. Some were sunk and some were burned. A few of the more valuable were manned and sent to French ports. Indeed, so many prizes were taken that the crew became worn out with the work. The *Argus* was at sea but one month and yet twenty ships, valued at $2,500,000,

were taken in that time. Of course all hands had to be on deck, and at work during every chase, and while each prize was disposed of. They were far too successful for their own personal welfare. As in the days when the *Reprisal*, under Captain Lambert Wickes, and the *Surprise*, under Captain Gustavus Connyngham, so now the British ship-merchants were filled with dismay and the insurance companies put up the rate on war-risks to a fabulous per cent. Cruisers were sent hurriedly to sea in search of the bold Yankee, and the *Argus* must needs fight or run very soon. Just one month from the day she sailed, the hour for a choice between these two courses had arrived.

At 5 o'clock on August 14, 1813, the lookout saw a big British brig coming down the wind under a full press of canvas. It was the *Pelican*, Captain John Fordyce Maples. Maples had put into Cork three days before, and had learned that a Yankee cruiser, of no great force, was destroying the British coastwise trade, and he at once sailed in search of the bold offender.

He was enabled to find the *Argus* by what had seemed to the Americans a continuance of their good-luck. The *Pelican* came into view at 5 o'clock in the morning after the crew of the *Argus* had been up about all night chasing and destroying a vessel loaded with wine from

Oporto, Portugal. They had destroyed her by setting fire to her, and the light of the flames had served as a beacon to guide the *Pelican* to the scene.

Very soon it became apparent that the enemy was one of the largest of the British war-brigs and therefore more than a match in force for the American sloop. Captain Allen, in consideration of his position and the condition of his crew—especially the condition of his crew—would have been justified in crowding sail and leaving the slower Englishman. But Allen was not that kind of a man.

The *Argus* was promptly cleared for action, and the men, though in many cases drunk with the wine of the captured wine-ship, and in all cases weary from lack of sleep, took their stations. For an hour the *Argus* tacked and filled, trying to get up to windward of the enemy, but without avail, and so shortened sail and at 6 o'clock wore around before the wind with her port-guns bearing on the enemy, and at that moment opened fire at a range of perhaps two hundred yards.

The *Pelican* replied with a full broadside and at 6.04 A.M. a ball struck Captain Allen, hurling him across the deck and tore off one leg. It was a mortal wound, but Allen struggled up till he rested his weight on his elbow and then continued to direct the battle until, after four

minutes, he fainted from loss of blood and was carried below. Lieutenant William H. Watson then took command, but four minutes later he, too, was cut down. A grape-shot struck his head and he was carried below unconscious. Then came William Howard Allen to take command of the quarter-deck and carry on the battle.

It had been a losing fight, thus far, and so it continued for the reason that the British guns were served better than the American. The rigging of the *Argus* was already badly cut up. Nevertheless, when the *Pelican* strove to wear across the stern of the *Argus*, Lieutenant Allen luffed up across the bows of the *Pelican*, where at short range he was able to deliver a raking broadside. But the Yankee crew, instead of cutting the life out of the enemy, merely fired into the air.

Then the after-sails of the unfortunate *Argus* became unmanageable because the braces were all shot away, and she swung around before the wind so that the *Pelican* was able to pass astern of her at 6.18 P.M. and rake her aft and fore. Holding this position by a skilful use of her sails, the *Pelican* fired broadside after broadside into the helpless Yankee, for fifteen minutes, cutting the stern, the rudder, and wheel-ropes to pieces, while the Americans could scarcely make a reply. Then the *Pelican*

The *Argus* Captured by the *Pelican*, *August 14, 1813.*

From an engraving by Sutherland of the painting by Whitcombe.

filled away and, running ahead, took a position off the starboard bow of the *Argus*, and there raked her with a fresh battery for ten minutes more, while the wind drifted the *Argus* down until she fell aboard the *Pelican*.

At that the British prepared to board, but the American flag was hauled down and the fighting ceased.

Looking at the details of the fight from the present time, the most remarkable fact in connection with it seems to be that the *Argus* endured the raking fire of her antagonist from 6.18 P.M. until 6.45 P.M., although scarcely able to fire a gun in return. With men who were either worn out, or drunk, or both, Lieutenant Allen stubbornly endured the sulphurous and iron storm. That an American crew would do this after the loss of the captain, and of the executive officer as well, was a fact that did not escape the notice of the enemy at the time. However much the report of the affair was exaggerated by the British writers, the British authorities knew the real facts. It was a defeat, but the Americans compelled respect even in this, that was, all things considered, one of the most unfortunate defeats suffered at sea during the war.

How it was particularly unfortunate appears from a consideration first of the losses. The *Argus* sailed with one hundred and thirty-seven

men, but had manned enough prizes to reduce her crew to one hundred and four. The *Pelican* carried one hundred and sixteen men, but since the *Argus* had enough men to handle her guns the superiority of numbers on the *Pelican* was a matter of no importance. But the *Argus* had ten killed and fourteen wounded, while the *Pelican* lost but two killed and five wounded. The *Argus* was a much smaller vessel—she measured but two hundred and sixty-eight tons to the *Pelican's* four hundred and sixty-seven, and she could fight with but ten guns, throwing two hundred and ten pounds of metal at a broadside, to the *Pelican's* eleven guns throwing two hundred and eighty pounds of metal. Nevertheless, the difference in losses was much greater than the difference in forces. It has been asserted that the American fire proved ineffective because the powder used after the first few rounds was from a lot taken from a prize that was bound to South America, loaded with what is known in commercial circles as "export powder"—a very inferior quality. If Captain Allen permitted this it shows he was not well posted in the tricks of the British export trade of his day. It is not denied that the *Pelican's* sides were full of dents where the Yankee's shot struck but did not penetrate. Still the most reasonable explanation of the inferiority of the Americans' fire is in the fact

that they had captured a wine-ship. By the modern standard of morals it would be disgraceful to allow a ship's crew to drink of a captured cargo of wine. In that day the standard of morals was different. Then, and for many years afterward, grog was served to all hands at least once every day in every naval ship afloat in the world. The men of the *Argus* had been working as never before in their lives for a month. It was entirely natural that some extra grog should be allowed them when the wine was captured, and it was entirely natural for the men to take too much.

A writer who lived at the time of the battle said of the result of it:

"We admit that the *Argus* was taken by a British sloop-of-war whose force was not materially greater than hers. It is one of those rare accidents which sometimes occur in the course of worldly events, and which, defying all calculation, and being in direct contradiction, not only to the usual course of events, but to the ordinary effects of known and acknowledged causes, are set down by the worldly as resulting from chance; by the orthodox as the effect of a miracle. *We will not stain the memory of gallant but unsuccessful men by stating in extenuation of defeat that they were unskilful, negligent and physically inferior to their opponents.*" And that

is a very proper view to take of the whole matter. Even the British historian Allen says "no disgrace attached to the vanquished."

For the consolation of the American patriot, however, it is worth comparing this fight with that between the *Hornet* and the *Peacock*. In the *Hornet-Peacock* fight the American forces were just about as much superior to the British as was the *Pelican* to the *Argus*, for the *Argus* carried short twenty-fours as did the British *Peacock*. But the *Hornet* sank the *Peacock* in fourteen minutes, while the *Pelican* was not able to subdue the *Argus* until after forty-five minutes. Worse yet, although firing at the closest range, the crew of the *Pelican* scarcely hurt the hull of the *Argus*—although she drifted practically as an idle target for almost twice fourteen minutes, the British gunners made so little impression on her hull that no writer of the time thought it worth while to tell just what they really did accomplish on her hull. And if the victories which the second American *Wasp* won over the *Frolic*, and the third American *Wasp* won over the British *Avon*, and the American *Peacock* won over the British *Epervier* be considered, it is found that they, too, outweighed the victory of the *Pelican* as did that of the *Hornet*.

But if this fails to console the extreme

American patriot—the "jingo" of these days—he has only to consider the effect of this victory of the British, together with that over the *Chesapeake*, upon the British themselves. That the announcement of the victory of the *Shannon* should have been cheered vociferously in Parliament; that the guns of London Tower should have been fired to express the national jubilation; that Broke should have been made a baronet; that the victory over the little *Argus* should have filled the nation anew with joy—where can one find as flattering an acknowledgment of the prowess of the American Navy as all this? The people whose "maritime supremacy had become a part of the law of nations" were not now fighting either Frenchmen or Spaniards.

The *Argus* was at once taken by a prize-crew to Plymouth. Captain Allen had had his leg amputated by his own surgeon when carried below. On arrival at Plymouth, he was taken to the Mill Prison hospital, where he died on August 18th. He was buried on August 21st, with the highest military honors, because in his treatment of both the passengers and the crews of all the ships he had captured, he had shown that he was a typical American gentleman. His name was given to a street in New York City to remind the wayfarer of his deeds.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LUCK OF A YANKEE CRUISER

THERE WAS NEVER A MORE FORTUNATE VESSEL THAN THE CLIPPER-SCHOONER *ENTERPRISE*—AS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED SHE WAS THE SWIFTEST AND BEST ALL-AROUND NAVAL SHIP OF HER CLASS AFLOAT—MEN SHE MADE FAMOUS IN THE WEST INDIES—A GLORIOUS CAREER IN THE WAR WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN PIRATES—EVEN WHEN THE WISDOM OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT CHANGED HER TO A BRIG AND OVERLOADED HER WITH GUNS SO THAT SHE "COULDN'T GET OUT OF HER OWN WAY," HER LUCK DID NOT FAIL HER—HER FIGHT WITH THE *BOXER*—EVEN A GOOD FRIGATE COULD NOT CATCH HER.

If the reader would like to learn the story of the luckiest American naval ship let him look up the details of the career of the little cruiser *Enterprise*, for of all the vessels that have carried the gridiron flag on the salt seas, or on any other seas, not one has had the credit of as many victories as she. Modelled with the finest lines known in the ship-yards of her day, she was launched in the year 1800, rigged as a schooner, armed with twelve six-pounders, and was then sent under Lieutenant John Shaw to the West Indies in search of the

French privateers that were preying there on American commerce. In a brief time she had taken eight of these privateers. Among them were included *l'Agile*, a vessel of practically the same weight of metal and of almost an equal crew, whose captain was noted as the most daring of his kind in that region, and the *Flambeau*, a larger vessel mounting twelve nine-pounders to the *Enterprise's* twelve sixes, and carrying a crew of one hundred and ten to the *Enterprise's* eighty-three. And that this Frenchman was both brave and persistent is amply shown by the fact that he did not surrender until forty out of his one hundred and ten men had been killed and wounded, leaving but seventy able to fight. A year later she was in the Mediterranean under Lieutenant Andrew Sterrett, and on August 1st she fell in with the Tripolitan polacre *Tripoli*, a vessel of fourteen guns and eighty men. So stubborn was the resistance of this pirate that he would not surrender until twenty of his men had been killed and thirty wounded out of the crew of eighty. The *Enterprise* did not lose a man. It was the *Enterprise* that captured the ketch *Mastico*, rechristened the *Intrepid*, with which Decatur entered Tripoli Harbor and burned the *Philadelphia*. And so the story runs.

When the War of 1812 was declared the *En-*

terprise was still in commission, but "official wisdom" had changed her so wofully that only an expert would have recognized in her the trim, fleet-winged schooner of 1801. Her tall and raking masts had been taken out and the squat rig of a brig substituted, while to make her still more top-heavy her armament had been changed from twelve sixes to fourteen short eighteens and two long nines. Her crew was increased by the addition of forty men, so she "became too slow to run without becoming strong enough to fight." That she "managed to escape capture" was "owing chiefly to good-luck" and the fact that "the British possessed a class of vessels even worse than our own," and these were usually the ones that the *Enterprise* happened to meet.

At the opening of the war the *Enterprise* was placed as a coast-guard between Cape Ann and the Bay of Fundy to drive off the British privateers that came hunting Yankee merchant-coasters. The reader of American history must keep in mind that to the whelming force of their regular navy which the British brought against the Yankees in this war, as well as in that of 1776, there was a force of English privateers numbering hundreds and carrying tens of thousands of armed men. In driving off privateers the *Enterprise* was very successful, for the reason that the British privateers were

rarely armed to fight a war-ship. At first she was under Master-Commandant Johnston Blakely, but he was promoted to the command of one of the new sloops built under the act of January 2, 1813 (the *Wasp*), and then Lieutenant William Burrows took charge of her.

At this time she was making Portsmouth, New Hampshire, her port of call, and on September 4, 1813, she sailed for Monhegan, where a number of privateers had been seen. The next forenoon, while approaching Penguin Point, not far from Portland, Maine, a brig was seen. There were men aloft, loosing her sails, while others were seen at the capstan getting up anchor. Only a man-of-war was likely to carry such a crew as that, and no American man-of-war was in that region except the *Enterprise*, and so Burrows cleared for action. At this time his crew numbered one hundred and two men.

Meantime the stranger fired four guns and set four British ensigns at different points on her spars, and then she stood out to sea, plainly eager for a fight with the *Enterprise*.

The stranger got under way at noon. A fresh breeze was blowing from the southwest, and Lieutenant Burrows headed offshore to get a-plenty of sea-room; and then to be prepared in case the stranger proved a faster sailer and should overhaul him, while yet too near

shore for a fair fight, he ordered one of the stern ports enlarged from the mere window that it was, to a port of sufficient size to permit the use of one of his long guns.

When the crew of the *Enterprise* heard the orders for this work passed, a distinct Yankee growl swept along the deck. Burrows had been on board but three days and they did not know him—they thought he meant to run instead of fight—and a midshipman was requested by the men on the forecastle to go aft and say to the captain that the ment wanted to fight. The middie yielded so far as to tell the executive officer, Lieutenant Edward Rutley McCall, what the men were growling about, and he, knowing the men well, promptly quieted them by explaining why the *Enterprise* was apparently running away.

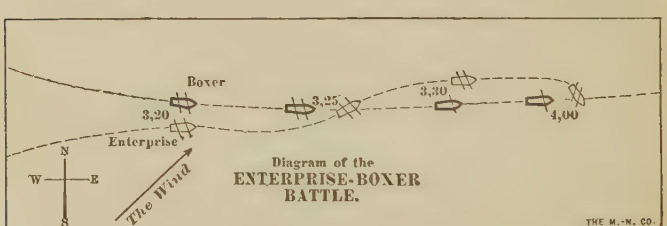
At 3 o'clock the desired offing was obtained, and then ensigns were set on the *Enterprise*, the topmen ran aloft to furl the lighter sails; came down again; manned the braces, and, tacking around, headed with free sheets for the enemy that with her brave show of bunting was coming on confident of victory. For twenty minutes thereafter the two ships approached steadily, each holding her fire until within half pistol-shot, when both cut loose almost at the same instant with a broadside. It was a deadly fire on both sides, for men were

struck on the *Enterprise* as well as on the enemy, and as it happened, those cut down on the *Enterprise* were working one of the quarter-deck guns. The men had cheered on both ships as they fired and on both sides they cheered as they began to reload their guns, Burrows joining in with encouraging words. As the short-handed crew just under his eye grasped the

The *Enterprise* and *Boxer*.
From a wood-cut in the "Naval Monument."

tackles to haul out the gun for the next round he ran to their aid, grasped the tackle-fall with both hands, braced his foot against the port-sill and threw his weight on the tackle with the men. And then came a canister-shot from the enemy through the port, striking the Yankee commander in the upper part of the leg by which he was braced, and, glancing along the bone of the thigh, it buried itself in his abdomen.

It was "a fearful wound," but Burrows, despite his mortal agony, refused to be carried below, "crying out that the colors must never be struck." However, Lieutenant McCall was obliged to take command, and this was one of the few instances in history where a subordinate who succeeded to the command of a ship because his superior was shot out of it has done as well as his chief could have done. The fire on the *Enterprise* continued as vigorous and



The wind was from the southwest.

effective as before. Her sailing proved, bad as it was, superior to that of the enemy, and on forging ahead McCall eased her sheets, hauled down his foresail, ran down across her bows, raked her with his port battery, and then luffing up and backing his head-yards, he raked her again and again with the fresh battery on the starboard side.

It is a story quickly told, but the enemy stood the fire, returning it as best they might with such guns as would bear, until 3.45 P.M., when an officer appeared on the top-gallant forecastle

and shouted that they had surrendered, but they could not haul down the colors because all of them were nailed fast to the spars.

The next moment another officer, though of inferior grade, jumped up in sight and, shaking his fists toward the *Enterprise*, shouted "no, no, no!" and added "some pretty strong words of opprobrium." However, his superior ordered him down, while the Americans laughed heartily at the scene the youngster had made.

Then men went aloft and with considerable labor ripped the ensigns from the spars and brought them to the deck. It was now learned that the beaten vessel was the British brig *Boxer*, Captain Samuel Blythe, and that Blythe had ordered the flags nailed aloft, saying that they should not be lowered while he lived; nor were they. At about the time that Burrows was mortally hurt, Blythe was struck fair in the chest by an eighteen-pound shot that almost cut him in two and killed him instantly.

Burrows happily lived until after the formal surrender. The sword of the British commander was brought on board the *Enterprise* and offered to him. Grasping it with both hands, he said:

"I am satisfied. I die content." A few minutes later he was dead.

The *Boxer* having been carried into Portsmouth, she was there inspected by Commo-

dore Hull, and letters written by him to the Secretary of the Navy and to Commodore Bainbridge give, with the official report of Lieutenant McCall, all the accurate information we have about the force of the *Boxer* and the damage she sustained. As to her guns, there is no dispute. She carried twelve short eighteens and two long sixes, to the fourteen long eighteens and two long nines on the *Enterprise*. The Americans, with short-weight shot, fired one hundred and twenty-five pounds of metal to the British one hundred and fourteen. Exactly what her crew numbered is not known. Commodore Hull wrote to Commodore Bainbridge as follows on this subject :

"We find it impossible to get at the number of killed ; no papers are found by which we can ascertain it. I, however, counted upwards of ninety hammocks, which were in her netting, with beds in them, besides several beds without hammocks ; and she has excellent accommodations for all her officers below in staterooms ; so that I have no doubt that she had one hundred men on board. We know that she has several of the *Rattler's* men on board."

As everyone familiar with the old-time warship knows, only the men before the mast and petty officers slept in hammocks. When Commodore Hull estimated "that she had one hundred men on board," he unquestionably meant

men before the mast and petty officers. In corroboration of this is the fact that Captain Blythe was looking for the *Enterprise.* He had sailed, only a few days before, from St. Johns, "where great exertions were made by the Government officers, as well as the magistrates of the place," to man and equip her in a perfect manner to fight the *Enterprise.* The victory of the British frigate *Shannon* over the Yankee *Chesapeake* was then but two months old, and Blythe was eager for the honors showered upon Broke. That she sailed from St. Johns with plenty of men is a matter not to be disputed. Moreover, a further reason for supposing that her crew numbered at least one hundred men is found in the fact that James, the oft-quoted British historian, says it numbered "sixty men and six boys." Recalling the fact that James said that the *Java* had but three hundred and seventy-seven men on board when her muster-roll showed four hundred and twenty-six; that he systematically understates the British force and overstates the American force in every instance where there was any motive for doing so, and that Benton, the British historian, distinctly says that the British naval authorities deliberately understated British losses in many reports given to the public in those days, it is simply fair to add fifty per cent. to the figures of James in this account.

However, it is asserted by the British that twelve of their crew were on shore that morning, and that the four guns fired when their flags were sent aloft and nailed to the mast were fired to recall these twelve, who, however, failed to get on board. This is very likely true. So from the one hundred and four, which all the American accounts of that day say the *Boxer* had, may be subtracted twelve, leaving ninety-two as the crew of the *Boxer*.

All of this space seems to be worth giving to the subject only because the British writers without exception twist like a flushed snipe whenever they are started by a Yankee victory over the British, and every well-informed American should have the facts at hand to bring them down.

Of the *Boxer's* crew, the British admit that four were killed and seventeen wounded. Lieutenant McCall in his report says that "from information received from the officers of that vessel, it appears there were between twenty and thirty-five killed." The *Enterprise* lost four killed and eight wounded.

As to the damage done to the *Boxer*, it is worth while quoting the words of Commodore Hull's letter of September 10, 1813 (written by the way, while Perry was winning glory on Lake Erie). He says:

"I, yesterday, visited the two brigs, and

was astonished to see the difference of injury sustained in the action.

"The *Enterprise* has but one eighteen-pound shot in her hull, and one in her main-mast, and one in her foremast; her sails are much cut by grape-shot, and there are a great number of grape lodged in her sides, but no injury done by them. The *Boxer* has eighteen or twenty eighteen-pound shot in her hull, most of them at the water's edge, and several stands of eighteen-pound grape stick in her side, and such a quantity of small grape that I did not undertake to count them. Her masts, sails, and spars are literally cut to pieces, several of her guns dismounted, and unfit for service; her top-gallant forecastle nearly taken off by the shot, her boats cut to pieces, and her quarters injured in proportion."

The British historian Allen in his account of this fight says, on page 438, vol. ii.: "The two vessels were much disproportioned in every way. The *Boxer* measured one hundred and eighty-one, the *Enterprise* two hundred and forty-five tons. The one was a fine roomy vessel, well manned and equipped, the *Boxer* a mere gun-brig, unfit for any other purpose than to protect a convoy of coasters from the attack of a French lugger. The result, therefore, cannot cause any surprise."

As a matter of fact, the *Boxer* was larger

than the *Enterprise* by thirty-five tons burden, and Allen's comment is worth quoting to show how a popular British historian misrepresented the little Yankee brig that was built as a schooner to carry a dozen six-pounders.

It was as fair a match as one will commonly find described in history. The *Boxer* was a few tons larger in size, and her officers had had experience in naval battles. The Americans had more guns and more men, with officers who had not had the experience of the enemy. The *Enterprise* was old and the *Boxer* new. But while the number of shot which the Americans could throw at a broadside were in number eight to the British seven, the number of times the British hull was struck was eighteen to the one shot the American hull received.

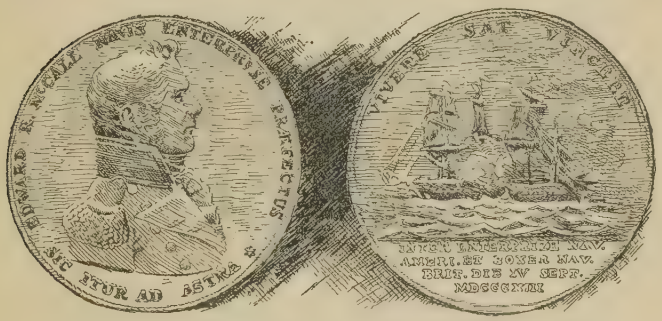
The report of the British court that tried the survivors of the crew for the loss of the *Boxer* said that the defeat of the *Boxer* was due to "a superiority of force, principally in the number of men, as well as to *a greater degree of skill in the direction of her fire*, and to the destructive effects of the first broadside."

To this may be added what the London *Times* said, editorially, on October 22, 1813:

"But what we regret to perceive stated is, that the *Boxer* was literally cut to pieces in sails, rigging, spars, and hull; whilst the *Enterprise* (her antagonist) was in a situation to com-

mence a similar action immediately afterward. The fact seems to be too clearly established that the Americans have some superior mode of firing; and we cannot be too anxiously employed in discerning to what circumstances that superiority is owing."

Both Captain Blythe and Captain Burrows were buried in Portland with the highest honors known on such occasions. Certainly, the gallant



Medal Awarded to Edward R. McCall After the Battle Between the *Enterprise* and the *Boxer*.

efforts of the British captain deserved all the honors that could be paid. A gold medal was voted by Congress to the nearest male relative of the dead American captain, and it is very likely still cherished as an heirloom in some South Carolina household, for Burrows was a native of that State. He was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Burrows, previously of the American Marine Corps. He was but twenty-seven years of age when killed.

After the battle, Master-Commandant James Renshaw was appointed to command the *Enterprise.* In company with the brig *Rattlesnake* she cruised off the southern coast of the nation, where she proved so slow that the *Rattlesnake*, although not a fast vessel, was often compelled to sail under top-sails only, while the *Enterprise* carried full sail. And yet on several occasions the *Enterprise* escaped from British frigates, and did so once though chased for seventy hours. If anything had been needed to confirm the old sailormen in their belief in the luck of the *Enterprise* this prolonged race would have done it. When the frigate appeared and gave chase the two Yankees separated, and the frigate chose to follow the *Enterprise.* During the three days that the frigate thereafter followed the ill-sparred American, the wind proved exceedingly variable and baffling, but it was without exception baffling in each change for the British ship. Time and again she almost overhauled the little *Enterprise*, but on each occasion the Yankee was favored by a shift of wind, or a calm where the row-boats could tow her, and at the last she got a breeze that placed her a long way fair to windward of the enemy, and before the frigate's flapping sails were filled with it the *Enterprise* beat fairly out of sight and escaped altogether. It is certain that she was handled with consum-

mate skill, just as Hull handled the *Constitution*, but then the *Constitution* was lucky, too.

The *Rattlesnake* was lucky for a time after separating from the *Enterprise* on this occasion, but was captured by the British frigate *Leander* later in the war.

The *Enterprise*, having reached Charleston in safety, was there employed as harbor guard until the end of the war.

So it happened that in spite of the risks taken by the bravest of sea-commanders during four different wars (she was in the second Mediterranean war), this the luckiest of ships known to the American register, perished at last in an honored old age, worn out in the service of the nation.

CHAPTER XVIII

GUN-BOATS NOT WHOLLY WORTHLESS

EVEN IN THE WORST VIEW OF THEM THEY ARE WORTH CONSIDERATION — THE BEST OF THEM DESCRIBED — THE HOPES OF THOSE WHO, LIKE JEFFERSON, BELIEVED IN THEM—REASONS FOR THEIR GENERAL WORTHLESSNESS THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MANIFEST BEFORE THEY WERE BUILT—PROMOTED DRUNKENNESS AND DEBAUCHERY—THEY PROTECTED YANKEE COMMERCE IN LONG ISLAND SOUND—A FIGHT WITH A SQUADRON IN CHESAPEAKE BAY—WHEN THE BRAGGART CAPTAIN PECHELL MET THE YANKEES — SAILING-MASTER SHEED'S BRAVE DEFENCE OF "NO. 121"—COMMODORE BARNEY IN THE PATUXENT RIVER—WHEN SAILING-MASTER TRAVIS OF THE *SURVEYOR* MADE A GOOD FIGHT—A WOUNDED YANKEE MIDSHIPMAN MURDERED—MEN WHO MADE FAME IN SHOAL WATER BELOW CHARLESTON.

As has been mentioned incidentally a number of times in the course of this history the Americans had, when war was declared to exist in 1812, a very large number of gun-boats—the quills, so to speak, of the great American heraldic porcupine (*Erethizon Dorsatus dormant*). Because in the days before the War of 1812 gun-boats—harbor-defence vessels—constituted in the eyes of the majority of American legislators the ideal navy for the American nation,

it is worth telling at some length just what these gun-boats were and what they accomplished in the way of compelling the world to respect the American flag. They are farther worth consideration because in these last days of the nineteenth century a very great number of people in the nation believe that if an enemy's battle-ship should dare to threaten the American metropolis, the courageous tugboatmen of the harbor would arm their little vessels with torpedoes and, swarming down to Sandy Hook, surround the audacious armor-clad, and by sheer force of numbers run in and explode their dynamite where it would fill the enemy with dismay, and his hull with water. Indeed, a noted orator has proposed this kind of a defence before a rapturously applauding audience in the metropolis, and some millions of his fellow-citizens read his words in the next morning's papers and, in their minds, patted themselves and him approvingly upon the back as they did so.

The gun-boat of 1812, when built on the most approved plans, was fifty feet long, eighteen feet wide, and four feet deep from deck-beams to the top of the keel, but of the two hundred and fifty-seven of these boats found in the harbors of the United States in June, 1812, nearly all were but ten instead of eighteen feet wide. Each boat was provided with two masts

and schooner sails, and with from twenty to thirty long oars, called sweeps. The crew of each varied from twenty to fifty, all told, and each (that is of the best) was armed with a long thirty-two pounder, the most efficient cannon of that day, which was mounted on a circle so that it could be pointed to any part of the horizon. The majority of the boats, however, were much smaller and carried smaller guns.

The arguments in favor of these vessels as stated by the friends of the system were as follows:

Frigates draw so much water and need so much sea-room for all manœuvres that they are utterly helpless in the shoal waters of the American harbors, while the gun-boats are moveable batteries, capable of going anywhere in any harbor that has three feet of water in it.

The gun of the gun-boat was as efficient as any of the best guns of the largest ship afloat, so forty gun-boats would have among them a more efficient battery than the *Constitution*, or any other frigate afloat.

In a contest between forty gun-boats and a frigate, the boats would have the broadside of the ship—say 1,500 to 2,000 square feet of surface—for a target, but the boats would fight her end on, and so each would present to her a target but ten feet wide (at most eighteen feet wide) and but two feet out of water.

The gun-boats would be scattered around the frigate and so the gunners would have to aim at the little targets separately.

The gun on the boat being low down near the water, had a better chance of hitting the frigate (and at the water-line) than a high gun had of hitting a low target.

Old-time Naval Gunnery.

From a wood cut.

If a shot fired at the hull of a frigate happened to fly too high it might still seriously injure the rigging and spars, but if a shot was fired at the gun-boat and bounded over the hull it would do no damage because the spars of the gun-boat were not for use in time of battle.

If a frigate lost her masts or her rudder she was helpless, but a gun-boat, having many oars, could surely be managed as long as she floated.

The gun-boats were cheap to build—seventy-five of them cost no more than one good frigate, or say $4,000 each.

On the whole the building of gun-boats certainly was a plausible scheme in the eyes of a landsman, especially as the first argument—as to the depth of water and sea-room required for a frigate—was unanswerable. But when the men who knew the sea looked upon the plan it made them sick at heart. The mere idea of proposing to protect the lives and liberties of the people of the nation from foreign aggression by inviting the enemy to come into our harbors to fight, was enough to make any patriot sick at heart. But that was only one point against the system.

Considering the physical qualities of the supposed combatants, when forty boats attacked a frigate the ship did, indeed, show a broadside of 2,000 square feet, while the gun-boat was only ten feet wide and two feet high out of water. Even at that the aggregate length of water-line of all the boats when standing precisely end on to the frigate was four hundred feet. But the boats could not and never did remain end on. They had to fire over one bow or the other, so the target that each presented was much more than ten feet wide and two high, and, what was worse, the gunners of the high-decked frigate could look down on the deck of the gun-boat.

Then the men on the gun-boats had to fight out on an open deck, as did Perry's men on Lake Erie, while those of a frigate fought behind thick timber bulwarks. And because the gun-boats were built with thin plank, a single shot could sink one, as happened to the sloop in the first fight on Lake Champlain, during this war, while a frigate could still float, as the brig *Boxer* did after it had received many shot below the water-line in the fight with the *Enterprise*.

More important still was the fact that even the best (widest) gun-boats needed absolutely still water when making a fight—the swell of an ordinary windy day in the lower bay of New York proved enough to destroy their efficiency, while the narrow boats rolled so under the recoil of their own guns even in smooth water that the crews had to wait, after each discharge, for the rolling to cease before firing again.

And then as to the cost, while it was perhaps true that the price of a frigate would have built seventy-five boats, a frigate required a crew of but four hundred or four hundred and fifty men, while a flotilla of the forty boats needed to match a frigate required, on the whole, 2,000 men, including three commissioned officers to each boat. Besides, forty gun-boats were never got together in a fleet to attack a frigate.

To all of this must be added the difficulty of finding forty gun-boat captains who would act together in battle, and the trouble in caring for the wounded when a ship had but four feet of head-room below its deck, and the wretched quarters there afforded to the men who had to man the boats.

And if there was lack of concert among the captains of the flotillas in battle, there was a worse lack of discipline on the vessels at all times. Captain Jacob Lewis, previously of the privateer *Bunker Hill*, was made Commodore of the fleet in New York Harbor. He was as efficient as any man of his experience could be, but his boats were manned by river boatmen; men who, though afraid to go to sea, were yet anxious to get the bounty and the good pay offered to naval seamen—waifs from the streets of the metropolis. "The temptations to insubordination and vice were much greater" in the gun-boats than in any other service. In short, there was every opportunity for drunkenness and the lowest forms of debauchery.

Nevertheless, in spite of the disreputable character of the gun-boat service as a whole, some few of the boats did actually burn gunpowder to the honor of the flag, and in some respects they were valuable, even though they did not fire their big guns once.

For instance, there were several flotillas of them along the coast from Newport, where Perry was in command early in the war, through Long Island Sound to New York. These were kept travelling to and fro convoying the coasting merchantmen, who were thus protected from British privateers and, at times, even from frigates, as well as from the attacks of British naval seamen in the small boats of the blockading squadrons. Moreover, the knowledge that a fleet of boats carrying a large gun each lay within a harbor, naturally kept the British from bringing their big ships, which needed plenty of sea-room for manœuvres, inside.

But the first encounter between gun-boats and a frigate demonstrated the inefficiency of the boats. On June 20, 1813, the British frigates *Junon* and *Barossa*, with the sloop *Laurestinus*, were becalmed in Hampton Roads. Seeing them helpless, Captain Tarbell, with a fleet of gun-boats, rowed out to attack them. The bay was smooth, and every condition favored the Yankee boats, but instead of having forty gun-boats to attack one frigate, as the gun-boat theory had proposed, Captain Tarbell had but fifteen. However, on arriving within long range (he did not dare try short range because grape-shot would sink a gun-boat), he anchored his fleet in the form of a crescent around the

Junon. But no sooner did he come to anchor than the boats swung around with the tide, and he could not fire a gun at the frigate without shooting away his own masts; so he up anchor again, and swinging around almost broadside on to the frigate with his sweeps, began blazing away. The first shot made some of his men wish they hadn't fired it, and the reason they wished so can be made plain even to a landsman. The boats, as told, were perhaps fifteen feet wide. The cannon each carried was a long thirty-two pounder. This gun was nine feet long, weighed five thousand pounds, and was mounted amidships, with its centre of gravity directly above the boat's keel. In that position, even when it was swung around to fire over either rail, it did not materially interfere with the stability of the boat if the water was smooth. But the instant it was fired it had to recoil and the whole two and a half tons of iron was hurled with a tremendous thump toward the rail of the boat, and over rolled the boat under the weight and shock of the recoil until "all hands thought she was done for sure enough."

However, although the danger was imminent, no boat did actually turn over in this fight. But the rolling that was started kept the crew busy with the sweeps for several minutes before another shot could be fired.

Feeble as was the attack, Captain Sanders, of

the *Junon*, made a very hasty and ill-directed fire in return, and with the first breath of wind strove to sail clear of the gun-boats. But Captain Sheriff, of the *Barossa*, as soon as he had steerage way, stood for the gun-boats, and by a well-directed fire soon disabled one and struck another, when Captain Tarbell thought best to retreat.

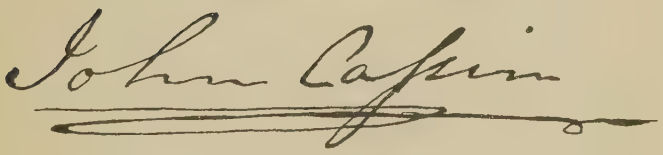
The Americans lost one man killed and two wounded. No losses were reported on the British ships, and it is certain that no material damage was done to them, for the *Junon* was in Delaware Bay a few days later taking part in another fight with gun-boats.

The only American who at all distinguished himself in this fight was Lieutenant William Bradford Shubrick, who was in the *Hornet* when she sank the *Peacock*. He commanded the gun-boat that approached nearest to the enemy, covered the retreat of the flotilla, and towed off the disabled boat, so saving it from capture. But he had had enough of gun-boat service, and as soon as possible got himself transferred to the *Constitution*, where he had a chance to see fighting of some consequence.

Meantime, however, he participated in a fight on shore against a landing party of British seamen, marines, and soldiers that ended in one of the most brilliant victories for the

Americans known to the war—the victory of Craney's Island, near Norfolk. This island had been fortified with a battery of eighteen-pounders, but was not ordinarily occupied by troops. It was merely a battery to be manned for the defence of Norfolk, whenever occasion demanded.

The occasion arose when, on June 22, 1813, three British seventy-four-gun ships-of-the-line, one sixty-four-gun ship, four frigates, two sloops, and three transports anchored off the island, and prepared to take possession. At that time the American frigate *Constellation* was blockaded at Norfolk (where she had been from the first), and her commander, Captain John Cassin, sent one hundred and fifty sailors and marines under Lieutenant H. B. Breckenridge to defend the fort. Lieutenants Neale, Shubrick, and Sanders were under Breckenridge. To whelm this tiny force the British came with seven hundred (James says seven hundred, so there were probably more) men in fifteen boats, the leader of the boats being a launch fifty feet long, called the *Centipede*, which was in charge of Captain Hanchett, of the *Diadem*, an illegitimate son of King George IV. The whole expedition was under the command of Captain Samuel John Pechell, the braggart who, in the *Guerrière*, painted her name on her foretopsail, and then cruised up and down the Yankee



From a lithograph at the Navy Department, Washington.

coast, and finally took John Deguyo, an American citizen, from the American brig *Spitfire* when she was within the waters of New York Harbor on May 1, 1811.

Captain Pechell had asserted his contempt for the American people when in the *Guerrière*, still he was willing that Captain Hanchett should command the first boat to attempt

the landing at Craney's Island. And that was unfortunate, too, for it was Hanchett who got hurt.

The enemy came on with the customary dash of British landing parties, but the Americans held their fire until the boats were within seventy yards, and then the well-charged battery was turned loose. At the first blast a round shot raked the *Centipede*, cutting off the legs of several of the men at the oars, severely bruising the thigh of Captain Hanchett, and sinking the boat. Two other big boats were sunk at the same round, and two more a moment later, but it was so shallow there that the thwarts of three of them were left above the water when they struck bottom. The crews leaped overboard, splashing their way to the other boats, and leaving behind dozens struggling in the throes of death and with the agony of lesser wounds. Seeing the advance checked, a party of the Americans, under Midshipman Josiah Tattnall, waded out among the boats, cutlasses in hand. When he saw Tattnall coming Captain Samuel John Pechell had had enough. He ordered a retreat, and led the way to safety. His hosts followed in disorder, leaving forty prisoners in the hands of the brave Tattnall, who was also able to drag three of the boats ashore.

The comment which the British favorite historian makes on this inglorious retreat of seven

hundred men before one hundred and fifty is the only one in his work whose meaning is not entirely clear. He says it was "A defeat as discreditable to those who caused it as it was honorable to those who suffered it. Unlike most other nations, the Americans in particular, the British, when engaged in expeditions of this nature, always rest their hopes of success upon valor rather than on numbers." What one would really like to know is whether James was writing sarcastically about the manifest cowardice of Pechell, or was he really of the belief that the Americans in this affair had failed to show a proper spirit. For, of course, under an ordinary British officer, not to mention a Chads or a Hope, the seven hundred British would have whelmed the one hundred and fifty Americans, in spite of the slender fortification.

As said, the British frigate *Junon* got around to the Delaware not long after her brush with the gun-boats in the Chesapeake. The sixteen-gun sloop-of-war *Martin* was with her, and the *Martin* grounded on Crow's Shoal. At that the *Junon* anchored near the *Martin*, and then came Lieutenant Samuel Angus with eight American gun-boats carrying a thirty-two each and two larger vessels (one-masted) to attack the *Martin*. The Americans were able to accomplish nothing of consequence in their great gun attack, because their powder was

worthless. The British shot passed over them when their shot fell short. Still, the truth is, the gun-boats were so frail that the crews never had the heart to make a really vigorous attack on a frigate. But when one of this flotilla happened to drift clear of the rest and the British sent their ships' boats to attack it, the Yankees made a fight that any nation might be proud of. This unfortunate gun-boat did not even have a name. It was "No. 121." It was commanded by Sailing-master William W. Sheed, and there was a crew of twenty-five all told and one long thirty-two. The British force numbered one hundred and forty men in seven boats, several of which carried howitzers, under Lieutenant Philip Westphal. Sheed anchored his craft, and as the boats approached opened fire with his big gun. The first shot broke the carriage pintle, and the next ruined the carriage ; so the gun became useless. Nevertheless Sheed rallied his little crew with small arms and fought the enemy until overpowered by sheer weight of numbers. But before they were overpowered they killed seven of the one hundred and forty British, and wounded thirteen. The Americans had seven men wounded. Of like character was the defence which Sailing-master Paine made with Gun-boat 160 in St. Andrew's Sound, near Savannah, when a tender and ten boats, loaded with men and small can-

non, attacked him. Paine had but sixteen men to resist nearly two hundred, but he fought them off for twenty minutes and only surrendered when the enemy at last thronged his deck. Paine was promoted for his gallantry.

Captain Joshua Barney, who made himself famous first by thrashing the British cruiser *General Monk* with a very inferior force in the Pennsylvania State cruiser *Hyder Ali*, during the war of the Revolution, and who, in the early part of the War of 1812, made a two-million dollar cruise against British commerce in a Baltimore clipper, took command of a fleet of gun-boats in Chesapeake Bay in 1813. But nothing of consequence occurred under his command until June, 1814. Then on June 1st he went in chase of two British schooners, and was fast overhauling them by the aid of long oars when a stiff breeze came up from the south and the sea rose so that the gun-boats were useless and he had to retreat. At that the schooners turned on him, but he made such a good fight in spite of the sea, that the schooners were glad to abandon the fight.

On June 7th came a sloop-of-war and a razee to reinforce the enemy. The razee is a style of ship of particular interest to Americans, because it became a favorite with the British in the War of 1812. A razee was a line-of-battle ship with her upper deck cut off. This reduced the

Joshua Barney.

From an engraving of the painting by Chappel.

number of her guns to about sixty, or perhaps a few less, but the guns left on her were of the heavy kind—long twenty-fours and thirty-twos. The razee became a frigate—*i.e.*, a two-deck ship—but with a thickness of timbers and a weight of metal far greater than what the Yankee frigates carried—the "bunches of pine boards" and "the waggons" whose architecture and weight of metal had so amused British writers before the war. Moreover, the razee, having been lightened by removing the upper deck of guns, was said to be a very fast ship.

On the arrival of this addition to the British squadron in the Chesapeake, Captain Barney had his gun-boats in the Patuxent River, a branch of the Potomac. On the morning of June 8, 1814, a British frigate, a brig, two schooners, and fifteen barges were seen coming up the river looking for the Yankees. Captain Barney retreated two miles in order to get into water where the frigate could not follow, and then, at the mouth of St. Leonard's Creek, anchored his boats in a line across the river.

By 8 o'clock the enemy had arrived at the head of navigation for his largest vessels, and having anchored there, the British barges, fifteen in number, came up to attack Captain Barney. They had placed their largest barge at the head of their line and armed her with iron-headed rockets, which at one time were in

great favor with the British. But when Barney put his men into thirteen barges and started down the river, the British thought best to retreat. A second attempt in the afternoon was abandoned under like circumstances, but on the 9th they really burned gunpowder.

"Twenty-one barges, one rocket boat, and two schooners, each mounting two thirty-two-pounders, with 800 men, entered the creek with colors flying, and music sounding its animating strains, and moved on with the proud confidence of superiority. Barney's force consisted of thirteen barges, and 500 men—his sloop and two gun-vessels being left at anchor above him, as unmanageable in the shoal water—but he did not hesitate a moment to accept the challenge offered, and gave the signal to meet the enemy, as soon as they had entered the creek. They commenced the attack with their schooners and rockets, and in a few minutes every boat was engaged; the Commodore in his barge with twenty men, and his son, Major William B. Barney—who, in a small boat, acted as his aid on the occasion—were seen rowing about everywhere in the most exposed situations, giving the necessary orders to the flotilla; the action was kept up for some time with equal vigor and gallantry, but at length the enemy, struck with sudden confusion, began to give way, and turning their prows, exerted all their force to

regain the covering ships. They were pursued to the mouth of the creek by the flotilla with all the eagerness of assured victory; but here lay the schooner of eighteen guns, beyond which it was impossible to pass without first silencing her battery, and for this purpose the whole fire of the flotilla was directed at her. She made an attempt to get out of the creek, and succeeded so far as to gain the protection of the frigate and sloop-of-war, but so cut to pieces, that, to prevent her sinking, she was run aground and abandoned. The two larger vessels now opened a tremendous fire upon our gallant little flotilla, during which they threw not less than seven hundred shot, but without doing much injury. The flying barges of the enemy having thus succeeded in recovering their safe position under the heavy batteries of the ships, the flotilla was drawn off, and returned to its former station up the creek.

"That the enemy suffered severely in this engagement was too manifest to be denied, even if their own subsequent conduct had not clearly proved the fact. Several of their boats were entirely cut to pieces, and both schooners were so damaged as to render them unserviceable during the remainder of the blockade—they had a number of men killed, and we have learned from an eye-witness of the fact, that the hospital rooms of the flag-ship, were long afterward

crowded with the wounded in this engagement. On the part of the flotilla, not a man was lost —one of the barges was sunk by a shot from the enemy, but she was taken up again on the very day of the action, and two days afterward was as ready as ever for service.

"On the first day of these repeated attacks, an incident occurred which is well worthy of being recorded. One of the enemy's rockets fell on board one of our barges, and, after passing through one of the men, set the barge on fire—a barrel of powder, and another of musket cartridges, caught fire and exploded, by which several of the men were blown into the water, and one man very severely burned, his face, hands, and every uncovered part of his body, being perfectly crisped. The magazines were both on fire, and the commander of the boat, with his officers and crew, believing that she must inevitably blow up, abandoned her, and sought safety among the other barges. At this moment Major Barney, who commanded the cutter *Scorpion*, and whose activity and intrepidity as aid to the Commodore in the last day's action we have already noticed, hailed his father and asked his permission to take charge of the burning boat. The Commodore had already ordered an officer upon that duty, but as his son volunteered to perform it, he recalled his order and gave him the permission solicited.

Major Barney immediately put himself on board, and by dint of active labor in bailing water into the boat and rocking her constantly from side to side, he very soon succeeded in putting out the fire and saving the boat.

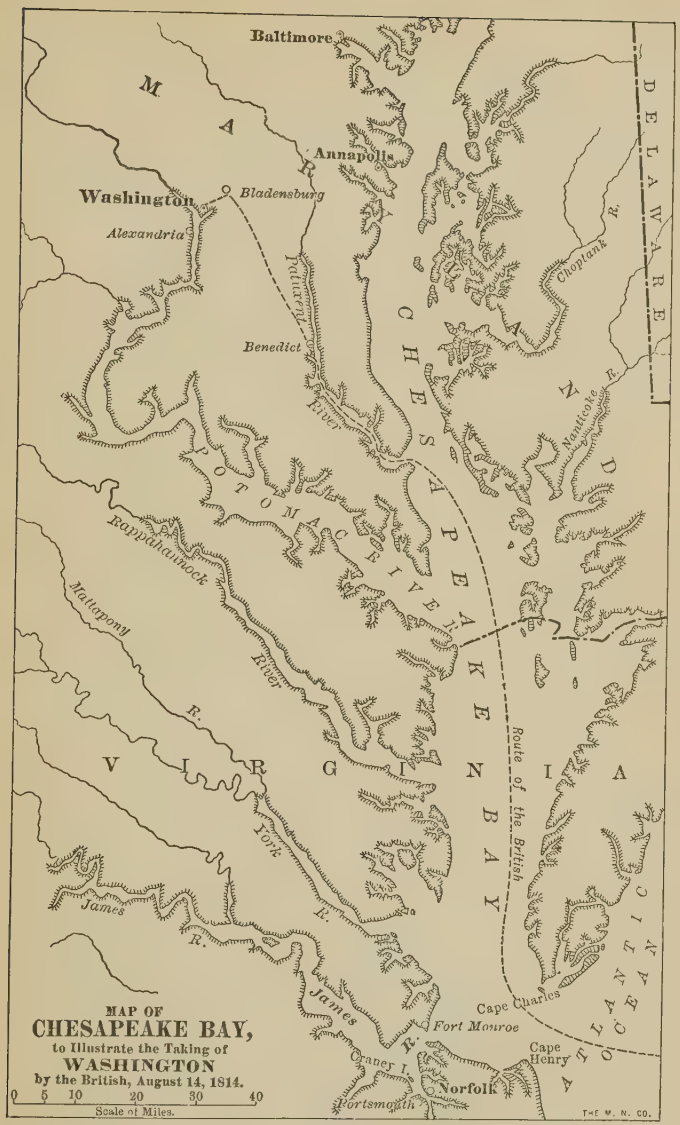
"After the severe chastisement inflicted upon them for their last attempt, the enemy made no farther effort to disturb the tranquillity of the flotilla, but contented themselves with converting the siege into a blockade, by mooring in the mouth of the creek, where they were soon reinforced by another frigate. Having come to this resolution, they turned their attention to the plunder of the surrounding country, in which frequent experience had given them expertness. Tobacco, slaves, farm-stock of all kinds, and household furniture, became the objects of their daily enterprises, and possession of them in large quantities was the reward of their achievements. What they could not conveniently carry away, they destroyed by burning. Unarmed, unoffending citizens were taken from their very beds—sometimes with beds and all — and carried on board their ships, from which many of them were not released until the close of the war.

"In this state of things, the Secretary of the Navy despatched a hundred marines, under the command of Captain Samuel Miller, with three pieces of cannon, to the assistance of Commo-

dore Barney. The Secretary of War also sent Colonel Wadsworth, with two pieces of heavy artillery, and ordered about 600 of the regular troops to be marched to St. Leonard's Creek for the same purpose. The militia of Calvert County had been already called out, but like most other troops of that class, they were to be seen everywhere but just where they were wanted—whenever the enemy appeared they disappeared ; and their commander was never able to bring them into action.

"Upon the arrival of Colonel Wadsworth, on June 24th, a consultation was held between him and the Commodore, to which Captain Miller of the Marines was invited ; it was decided by these officers, that a battery and furnace should be erected on the commanding height near the mouth of the creek, upon which the colonel's two eighteen-pounders should be placed, and that, on the 26th before daylight, a simultaneous attack should be made by the flotilla and battery upon the blockading ships. The Commodore placed one of his best officers, Mr. Groghegan (a sailing-master), and twenty picked men, under the command of Colonel Wadsworth, for the purpose of working his two guns.

"On the evening of the 25th, after dark, the Commodore moved with his flotilla down the creek, and at early dawn of the 26th they were gratified and cheered by the sound of the guns


Baltimore
MARYLAND
Annapolis
Washington
Bladensburg
Alexandria
Patuxent River
Benedict
DELAWARE
Choptank R.
CHESAPEAKE BAY
Nanticoke R.
POTOMAC RIVER
Rappahannock River
Mattapony R.
VIRGINIA
York R.
James R.
Route of the British
Cape Charles
Fort Monroe
Cape Henry
Craney I.
Norfolk
Portsmouth
MAP OF
CHESAPEAKE BAY,
to Illustrate the Taking of
WASHINGTON
by the British, August 14, 1814.
0 5 10 20 30 40
Scale of Miles.
THE M. N. CO.

from the opening battery on the height. The barges now seemed to fly under the rapid strokes of the oar, and in a few minutes reached the mouth of the creek, where they assumed the line of battle, and opened fire upon the moored ships. Their position was eminently critical and hazardous, but this in the view of the gallant souls on board only rendered it the more honorable. They were within four hundred yards of the enemy ; and the mouth of the creek was so narrow as to admit no more than eight barges abreast. The men were wholly unprotected by any species of bulwark, and the grape- and canister-shot of the enemy, which were poured upon them in ceaseless showers, kept the water around them in a continual foam. It was a scene to appall the inexperienced and the faint-hearted ; but there were few of these among the daring spirits of the flotilla. In this situation, the firing was kept up on all sides for nearly an hour. The Commodore was then surprised and mortified to observe that not a single shot from the battery fell with assisting effect, and that the whole fire of the enemy was directed against his boats. Shortly afterward the battery, from which so much had been expected, became silent altogether, and the barges were hauled off as a matter of consequent necessity. Three of our barges, under the respective commands of Sailing-mas-

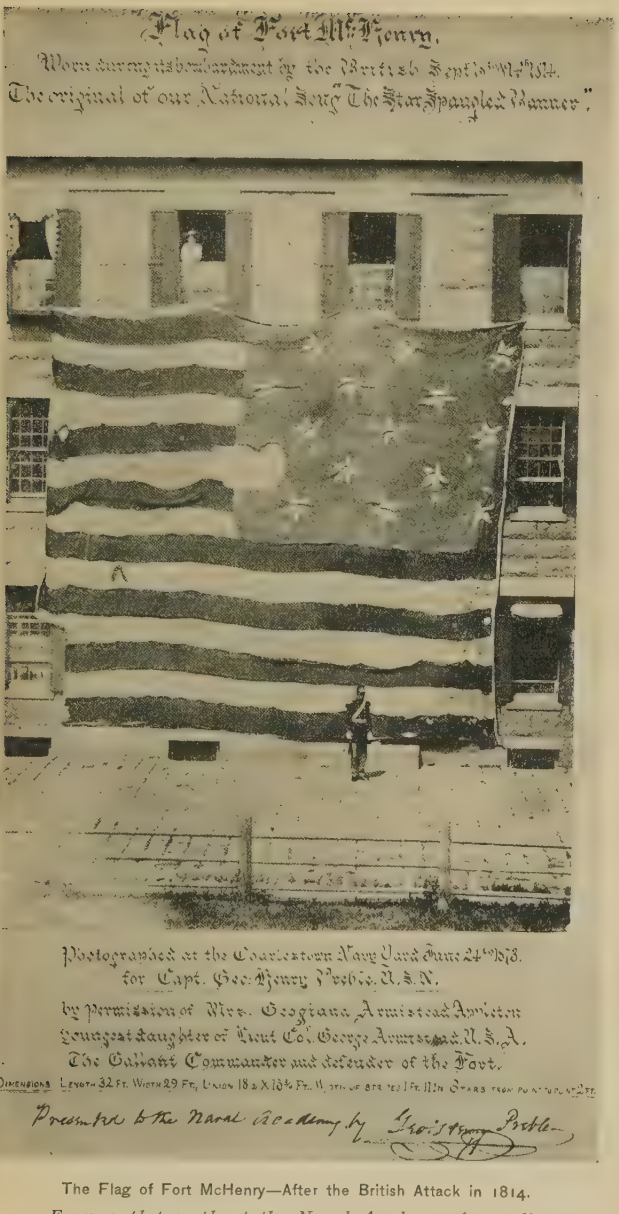
ters Worthington, Kiddall, and Sellars, suffered very much in the action, and ten of their men were killed and wounded.

"A few minutes after the flotilla had retired, it was perceived that the enemy's frigates were in motion, and in a little time the whole blockading squadron got under way and stood down the river. One of the frigates, it was observed, had four pumps constantly at work. This movement on the part of the enemy spoke pretty plainly their opinion of "Barney's flotilla;" it was very evident that they had seen quite as much of him as they desired to see. The way being thus unexpectedly opened to him, the Commodore immediately left the creek, and moved up the Patuxent River.

"On the night after the engagement the flotilla was anchored opposite the town of Benedict, on the Patuxent. As they were moving up the river, Captain Miller of the Marines went on board the Commodore's boat, and gave him the first information he had received from the ineffective battery. It appears that Mr. Groghegan, on the evening of the 25th, waited upon Colonel Wadsworth, to receive instructions as to the place where the two guns were to be stationed; the colonel replied to his inquiry in these words: "As you are to command and fight them, place them where you please!" The officer immediately set to work with his men,

and began to construct his battery on the summit of the hill which completely commanded the ships. He continued at work all night and had nearly finished his platform when, about 1 A.M., Colonel Wadsworth came upon the ground, and after examining the work, declared "that his guns should not be put there—that they would be too much exposed to the enemy!" Having given this as his only argument, he ordered a platform to be made in the rear of the summit. As there could be no disputing his orders, he was obeyed, of course, and the consequence was, that the guns, being placed on the declivity, must either be fired directly into the hill, or be elevated, after the manner of bombs, so high in the air as to preclude the possibility of all aim, and rendered them utterly useless. At the very first fire, the guns recoiled half way down the hill, and in this situation they continued to be fired in the air, at random, until the colonel gave orders to have them spiked and abandoned."

The above quotations are from Mary Barney's "Memoir of Commodore Barney." The British were driven away for the time, but they returned in August, having determined to attack the American capital. Under orders from Washington Captain Barney burned his fleet, and with his men, some four hundred in number, joined the army assembled to defend the


Flag of Fort Mc Henry.
Worn during its bombardment by the British Sept. 13th 14th 1814.
The original of our National Song "The Star Spangled Banner".
Photographed at the Charlestown Navy Yard June 24th 1858.
for Capt. Geo. Henry Preble, U.S.N.
by Permission of Mrs. Georgiana Armistead Appleton
Youngest daughter of Lieut Col. George Armistead U.S.A.
The Gallant Commander and defender of the Fort.
Dimensions Length 32 Ft. Width 29 Ft. Union 18 2 X 16 4 Ft. W. 9th of Str. 2 Ft. 11 In. Stars from point to point 2 Ft.
Presented to the Naval Academy by Geo. Henry Preble

The Flag of Fort McHenry—After the British Attack in 1814.
From a photograph at the Naval Academy, Annapolis.

capital. They made the best fight of any body of men there when the final fight came, and Barney received a wound from which he never fully recovered, although he lived several years longer. The new forty-four-gun frigate *Columbia* and the sloop-of-war *Argus* were burned on the stocks when Washington was taken by

The Capture of Washington.

From an old wood-cut.

the British, besides the old condemned *Boston* and a lot of ship timber and naval stores. This was, of course, an entirely legitimate destruction. Had the gun-boats been one-half as efficient as their advocates supposed they were, Washington would not have been captured.

A small-boat fight well worth a paragraph occurred on June 12, 1813, in Chesapeake waters, when all the boats of the British frigate

Narcissus were sent, under Lieutenant Cririe, to attack the little United States schooner *Surveyor*, commanded by Sailing master William S. Travis, who had but fifteen men and boys, all told, under him. The *Surveyor* was lying in York River at the time. The attack was made at night, and the guns of the schooner were useless, because the enemy came at her from points where broadside guns could not be made to bear. Nevertheless, Mr. Travis defended his ship, holding his fire of small-arms until the British were within a few yards. The one discharge killed three of the enemy and wounded seven, a remarkably deadly fire for night-work—but the British host came on, and before the American weapons could be reloaded, the weight of numbers overpowered the gallant little crew. Lieutenant Cririe was so impressed by the bearing of the Americans that he returned the sword of Travis with a highly complimentary letter.

A very interesting fight was made by the Mosquito fleet on July 14, 1813. The American schooners *Scorpion* and *Asp*, of the Chesapeake Bay defence fleet, each armed with three small guns, were chased by a flotilla of boats from the British blockading squadron. The *Scorpion* was fleet-winged and escaped up the bay, but the *Asp* was too slow for that, and took refuge in Yeocomico River. The British

followed and were beaten off, but they returned in fire-boats with about one hundred men, and, enraged at this first failure, gave no quarter. The *Asp* was commanded by Midshipman Sigourney. He was shot through the body at the first attack, but remained on deck in a sitting posture to inspire his men when the enemy returned. And when the enemy had killed or driven overboard all the Americans except Sigourney, a British marine deliberately put his musket to Sigourney's head and fired, blowing his brains out. Sigourney had served under Lawrence in the *Hornet* when she sank the *Peacock*, but it is unlikely that the Englishman knew this fact. After setting fire to the *Asp*, the British went away, and then the Americans returned on board and extinguished the fire unmolested.

It is worth noting that on a considerable number of occasions during this war the Englishmen gave no quarter—it is worth noting as showing how greatly they were exasperated by their numerous defeats afloat. Indeed, after Barney's attack on the *Loire* and *Narcissus*, British sailors (who were, it must be remembered, commanded by Admiral Sir George Cockburn), in their landing parties, not only robbed the defenceless citizens, but assaulted the women who happened to fall into their hands. And when they captured Washington,

they not only destroyed such property as might be destroyed legitimately, but they repeated the universally execrated crime of Alexandria —they repeated the crime of which the fanatical priests of Spain were guilty among the civilized people of Yucatan—they deliberately burned the national library. The Knighted Admiral with his own hands took part in this work of destruction. Allen honors this British officer with a full-page engraving, in his history of the British Navy, only fifteen others being so distinguished in Volume II. of that work.

This is a chapter of small-boat fights, and it is of particular interest to Americans because of the great courage and good fighting ability usually displayed by the Yankee crews. The little schooner *Alligator* was one that made a good name. Under Sailing-master Bassett, when lying at Cole's Island, near Charleston, she was attacked at night by six boats loaded with small cannon and seamen. She had but forty men on board, but after a half hour's fight they drove away the enemy. The British did not report their loss, but one may get an idea of their disorder when they fled, from the fact that one of the attacking cutters was found aground on North Edisto next day, badly cut up, and with the bodies of an officer and a common seaman lying dead nearby. The others

had been too much demoralized to care for the wounded, and these two, after the boat drifted ashore, had left it, vainly seeking help, and had died together.

Last of all will be told the story of Sailing-master Lawrence Kearny's attack on the men of the British frigate *Hebrus*, near Charleston. The *Hebrus* had sent a lot of men and boats ashore for water, and they had landed out of gunshot from their frigate. So Kearny, with three barges, went after the water-party. The Americans were seen afloat from the *Hebrus*, and signals were at once set and guns fired to recall the water-party. Two boats of that party got outside clear, but a shift of wind enabled the Americans to get between the frigate and a large tender that had been of the water-party.

At that the *Hebrus* opened fire on the American barges and signalled her two water-boats to return to the aid of the tender. And when her water-boats failed to obey these signals she opened fire on them as well. So near was the frigate at this time that a shot took off the head of a man sitting beside Kearny, but he held fast on his course and captured the tender (a schooner, armed with a carronade and six brass swivels), the big launch of the *Hebrus* and forty men, all of which were carried off from under the guns of the enraged Englishman. Nor was that all, for a few days later Kearny manned

the captured launch with twenty-five men, and rowing out alongside the tender (a schooner) of the British ship *Severn*, he boarded her in spite of the resistance of her crew of more than thirty men, and succeeded in taking her and her crew into port also. "Handsomer exploits of the sort were not performed in the war."

And the story of the gun-boats is not completed, as will appear in the account of the Navy's part in the battle of New Orleans.

END OF VOL. II.

APPENDIX TO VOLUME II

PRIZE MONEY AND PAY IN 1812.

THE act of April 22, 1800, provided for the distribution of prize money in the sections given below, and it was under this law that the crews of the American ships were paid in the War of 1812.

Sec. 6. *And be it enacted*, That the prize money, belonging to the officers and men, shall be distributed in the following manner :

I. To the commanding officers of fleets, squadrons, or single ships, three twentieths, of which the commanding officer of the fleet or squadron shall have one twentieth, if the prize be taken by a ship or vessel acting under his command, and the commander of single ships, two twentieths ; but where the prize is taken by a ship acting independently of such superior officer, three twentieths shall belong to her commander.

II. To sea lieutenants, captains of marines, and sailing masters, two twentieths ; but where there is a captain, without a lieutenant of marines, these officers shall be entitled to two twentieths and one third of a twentieth, which third, in such case, shall be deducted from the share of the officers mentioned in article No. 3 of this section.

III. To chaplains, lieutenants of marines, surgeons, pursers, boatswains, gunners, carpenters, and master's mates, two-twentieths.

IV. To midshipmen, surgeon's mates, captain's clerks, schoolmasters, boatswain's mates, gunner's mates, carpenter's mates, ship's stewards, sailmakers, masters-at-arms, armourers, cockswains, and coopers, three twentieths and an half.

V. To gunner's yeomen, boatswain's yeomen, quarter masters, quarter gunners, sailmaker's mates, serjeants and corporals of marines, drummers, fifers, and extra petty officers, two twentieths and an half.

VI. To seamen, ordinary seamen, marines, and all other persons doing duty on board, seven twentieths.

VII. Whenever one or more public ships or vessels are in sight, at the time any one or more ships are taking a prize or prizes, they shall share equally in the prize or prizes, according to the number of men and guns on board each ship in sight.

No commander of a fleet or squadron shall be entitled to receive any share of prizes taken by vessels not under his immediate command; nor of such prizes as may have been taken by ships or vessels intended to be placed under his command, before they have acted under his immediate orders; nor shall a commander of a fleet or squadron, leaving the station where he had the command, have any share in the prizes taken by ships left on such station, after he has gone out of the limits of his command.

Sec. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That a bounty shall be paid by the United States, of twenty dollars, for each person on board any ship of an enemy at the commencement of an engagement, which shall be sunk or destroyed by any ship or vessel belonging to the United States, of equal or inferior force, the same to be divided among the officers and crew in the same manner as prize money.

Sec. 8. *And be it further enacted*, That every officer, seaman or marine, disabled in the line of his duty, shall

be entitled to receive for life, or during his disability, a pension from the United States according to the nature and degree of his disability, not exceeding one half his monthly pay.

No change in the pay of the officers of the navy having been made after the year 1799, the annual amount to which each officer in actual service was entitled during the War of 1812 was :

A captain commanding a squadron of ships	$1,200
A captain of a ship of 32 guns and upwards....	1,200
A captain of a ship under 32 guns.....	900
A master commandant.....	720
A lieutenant commanding.....	600
A lieutenant.....	480
A surgeon...	600
A sailing master, purser, and chaplain, each....	480
A surgeon's mate.....	360
A boatswain, gunner, sailmaker, or carpenter ..	240
A midshipman.....	228
A seaman	144

The following is a statement of the pay in the British navy during the War of 1812 :

In the British navy an admiral of the fleet receives £6 sterling per diem, and is entitled to twelve servants at 32*s.* per month each ; an admiral receives £5 sterling per day, and is entitled to ten servants ; a vice-admiral, £4 sterling per day, and seven servants ; a rear-admiral or commodore with a captain under him, £3 sterling per day while his flag is flying within the limits of his station ; a captain of the fleet receives £3 sterling per day, and is entitled to three servants at 32*s.* per month each. Making these various allowances, the annual amount of compensation to officers of the British navy, from the admiral of the fleet down to the commander of a sloop or bomb, is :

Admiral of the fleet	$15,624
Admiral	13,831 11
Vice-admiral	11,952 88
Rear-admiral or commodore with a captain under him	10,160
Captain of the fleet	5,122 67
Captain of a 1st rate, 800 to 900 men	3,272 87
Captain of a 2d rate, 650 to 700 men	2,864
Captain of a 3d rate, 600 to 650 men	2,455 11
Captain of a 4th rate, 350 to 450 men	2,045 33
Captain of a 5th rate, 280 to 300 men	1,636 44
Captain of a 6th rate, 125 to 175 men	1,432
Captain of a sloop, 100 men or less	1,227 55

All which is exclusive of indulgences and allowances not known in our service.

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